



THE  
COVENANT  
SCHOOL  
Be Transformed

Annual Report 2019-2020

# A Message from our Head of School

**What a blessing to look back on the 2019-2020 academic year and rejoice in all that God has done!**



**Robert Littlejohn, Ph.D.**  
Head of School

Dear Covenant Community,

What a blessing to look back on the 2019-2020 academic year and rejoice in all that God has done!

The school year began as scheduled with record enrollment. We sent our seniors off to Arkansas for their class trip, enjoyed in-person Opening Chapel together, had an amazing PTF Registration in Rhetoric Hall, sweated through some great 105-degree Saturday home football games, and cheered on some cooler volleyball games and cross country meets, launched a major capital campaign with many lovely Covenant family-hosted home gatherings, raised funds for tuition assistance at Stevens Park Golf Course, delighted in multiple performances of *The Sound of Music* at Bishop Lynch Auditorium, hosted Dr. Ralph Wood from Baylor for Project Standfast, and met with kind neighbors about revising our deed restrictions to allow lights on Miller Field. And all that before Fall Break.

All in all, it was a fantastic year in every respect until Friday, March 13 when the whole world changed. By God's grace, and thanks to many terrific faculty and administrators giving up their spring break, we transitioned our intentionally low-tech classical school to 100% remote teaching and learning in ten days' time. It wasn't perfect, but with a great deal of patience from our wonderful families, teachers taught the stated curriculum and students learned in ways that few schools could match. Two weeks became four. And four weeks became eight. But through all the uncertainty and weekly changes, and with a great deal of creativity and grace all around, we completed the 2019-2020 school year, promoted all of our students, and pivoted to treat our seniors to a blessings banquet and a lovely graduation ceremony slightly later than originally planned. Thanks be to God!

Meanwhile, we kept on track with design of a new Rhetoric building and, thanks to the incredible generosity of our entire Covenant community, raised \$8.2 million for the building campaign, and received approval for our lights on Miller Field. Go Knights!

We are excited that the dawning of a new school year has seen us welcoming students back on campus, daily construction, and Friday night lights – despite an ongoing pandemic. God has richly blessed our efforts to keep everyone healthy, safe and mostly on campus. And we look forward to the good fellowship we will all enjoy again when parents can be back on campus – as is the Covenant way.

*Non Nobis,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Littlejohn". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert Littlejohn, Ph.D.  
Head of School

# Inside the Report

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## Mission Statement

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**Covenant exists to glorify God by equipping students with the tools necessary to pursue a lifetime of learning so that they may discern, reason and defend truth in service to our Lord, Jesus Christ.**

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# A Letter from the Chairman of the Board

**Transformation permeates our entire being – our bodies, minds, hearts, and most importantly, our souls. And Covenant secures that transformational opportunity not just for students who are enrolled here, but for the faculty, staff, and parents as well.**



Eliot Kerlin Jr.

Dear Covenant Community,

We discuss transformation a lot at Covenant, a worthy goal for a school community of like-hearted families and faculty. As we all have experienced, it is a process that requires time, patience, and, often, an appetite for the unexpected.

This past school year was filled with the unexpected. A fall that included a beautiful musical and success in athletics gave way to a spring of drive-by birthdays, canceled trips and celebrations, and a socially distanced graduation. But one thing that should not surprise us: how adept our school was at navigating these tricky waters and how faithful our God was to provide for us.

Despite – and perhaps in some cases, because of – challenges and disappointments, we are still being transformed in positive ways. Character-forming, mind-renewing, life-giving, friendship-building ways – ones that often go unnoticed day-to-day but that promise to yield visible and eternal fruit.

One place we can notice transformation is on campus. After launching our most extensive capital campaign to date and securing permission to erect lights on our field, we will see our campus be transformed physically over this next year. Although the pandemic required changes to campus life, we resumed this fall with joy and gratitude. Face masks and hand sanitizer can not stop this growth and transformation process, the thrill of discovery, and the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding.

Nor can the challenges of this season stymie the generosity of the Covenant community. We may not walk campus as we have before, but parents continue to sacrifice their time, talents, and treasure. Hundreds of volunteers give thousands of hours literally to transform Covenant into a unique experience for young hearts and minds. We also thank the faculty, families, and others who gave generously to our emerging Rhetoric School building.

We would also like to honor two long-serving trustees' service: JJ Barto and Nathan Golik. Each served in many capacities and as board chairs, and our school is richer for their leadership, wisdom, and countless hours.

Transformation permeates our entire being – our bodies, minds, hearts, and most importantly, our souls. And Covenant secures that transformational opportunity not just for students who are enrolled here, but for the faculty, staff, and parents as well. The stories of resilience, ingenuity, encouragement, and prayerful dependence in our school community that marked the past school year will similarly impact each of our stories going forward. When we look back on this season of life, let us remember that His mercies were new every morning and that they will be every morning hence.

*Non Nobis,*

Eliot Kerlin Jr.

**Thank you, J.J. and Nathan, for serving as previous board chairs.**



J.J. Barto



Nathan Golik

# Meet Our Board

## 2019-2020 Covenant Board

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### Amy W. Anderson

Vice Chairman

Amy holds a BSW from Texas Christian University. She and her husband Bob have three children.



### Elise Harper

Elise holds a BA in Economics from Wake Forest University and an MBA from Northwestern Kellogg University. She and her husband Jonathan have three sons.



### Dr. Gregg Hodges

Gregg is a physician at Texas Digestive Disease Consultants. He and his wife Laurie were among the first families at Covenant, and they have four Covenant graduates.



### Eliot Kerlin

Chairman

Eliot holds a BBA in Finance from Texas A&M University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He and his wife Corrie have four children.



### Allan Koenig

Allan holds a BA in News Communication from the University of Oklahoma. He and his wife Katy have two children.



### Gary Koerner

Gary is the president of Three Architecture. He and his wife Kay are one of the founding Covenant families. They have four Covenant graduates and two Covenant grandchildren.





### Tony Long

Tony holds a BBA from the University of Texas and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He and his wife Sharon have three children, two Covenant graduates and one current student.



### John Lewis

John holds a Liberal Arts degree from New Saint Andrews College and an MS in Finance from Vanderbilt University. He and his wife Naomi have four children.



### Brian McFarlane

Brian received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from UT at Arlington. He and his wife Beth have four children.



### Andrea Thomason

Andrea holds a BA in Cognitive Neuroscience from Harvard University and her MD from UT Southwestern Medical Center. She and her husband Tim have four children.



### Ray Sperring

Treasurer  
Ray holds a BBA in Finance and M.I.S. from Baylor University. He and his wife Miriam have four children.



### Jeff Walker

Secretary  
Jeff holds a BBA from Baylor University and Juris Doctorate from LSU's Paul M. Herbert Law Center. He and his wife Marina have three children.

# Transformed through Service

## Thank You Parent Volunteers

Roughly 13,000 hours are spent annually by our incredible parent volunteers. Whether serving in a Parent Teacher Fellowship role, fundraising through golf, auction, athletic booster club or friends of the arts, shelving books in the library, serving as a board member, or scribing, Covenant would not be the place it is today without the outpouring of labor and love of our parents.

Covenant transforms strangers into friends and families that grow together into a thriving community. Many Covenant traditions, including Opening Chapel, Fall Frenzy, Living History Day, Spring Fling, Christmas Chapel, Shakespeare Festival, Love Thy Neighbor, and more, would not be possible without the generous donations of time given by the parents in our community!

By the Numbers  
**13,000 volunteer hours annually**





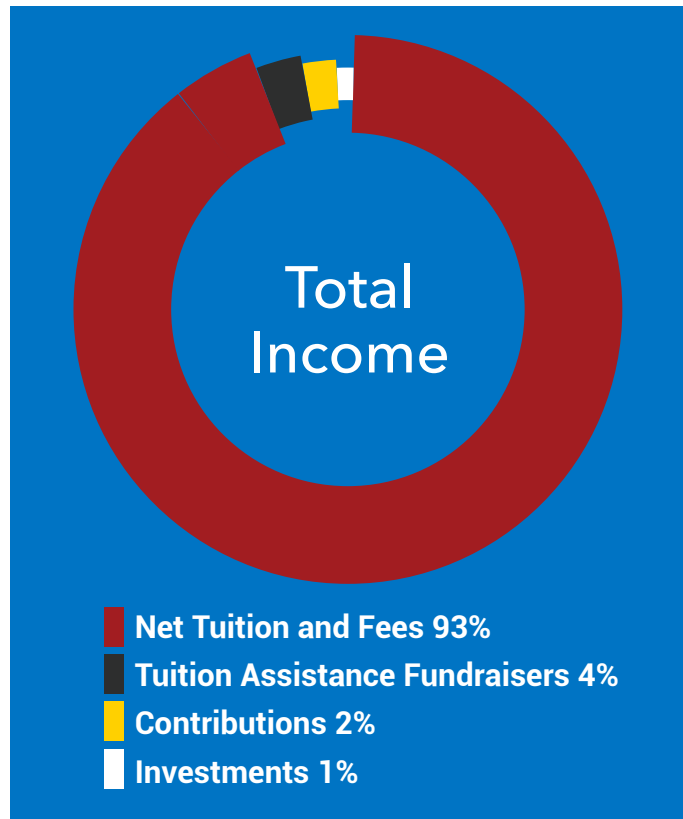




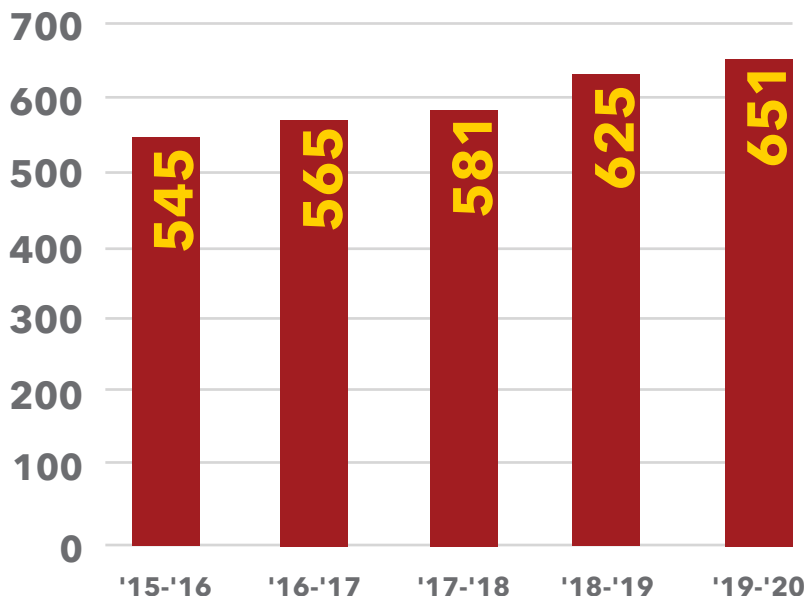
# Transformed through Stewardship

## 2019-2020 Financial Overview

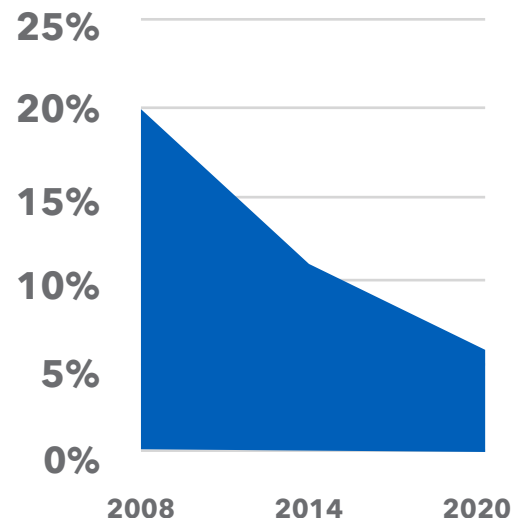
Through the Lord's gracious provision, Covenant has been blessed by wise men and women who have ensured the school's financial stability. Praise be to God that admissions enrollment has grown consistently year over year providing our largest source of income. Debt service as a percentage of tuition expense has consistently been reduced. The largest expense is also our greatest asset: compensating the incredible teachers who instill the riches of the classical tradition in our students each day.



**Total Enrollment** Past 5 Years



**Debt Service Reduction**





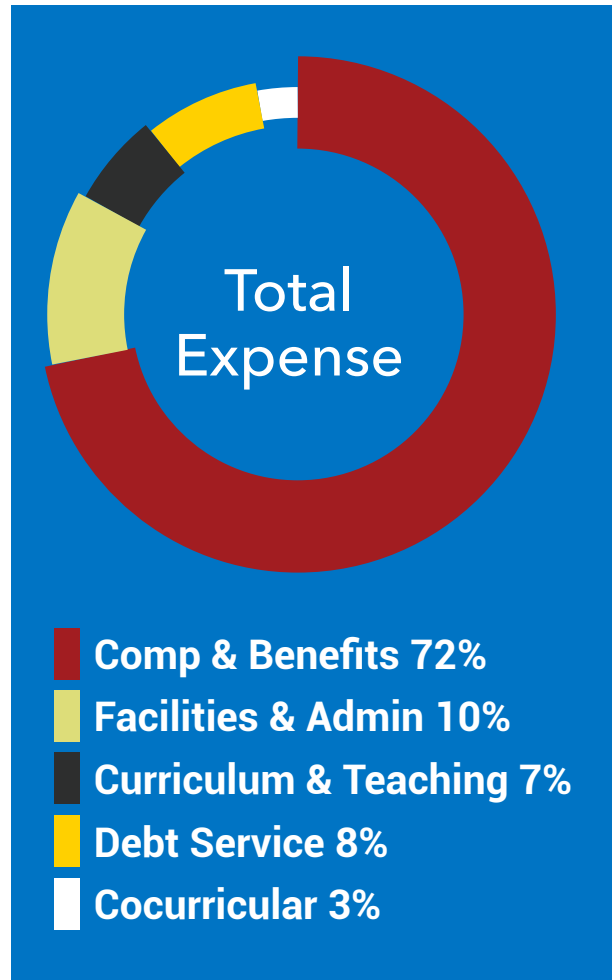
“ Classical to me has always meant joining in with the great thinkers of world history to contemplate eternal truths. Moderns might be surprised that ancient or medieval thinkers would have thoughts to contribute to our present age. We would be surprised if they didn't. After all, there's nothing new about our preoccupation with justice, virtue or what constitutes the good life. ”

**John Dawson**  
Rhetoric Faculty Member, History Department



“ Logic students are poised to begin to think for themselves and are ready to examine larger questions. Because our curriculum is thoughtfully designed, I have the privilege of helping students contemplate and deliberate the important ideas and insights that have given direction and wisdom to humanity before them. Logic School is such a wonderful time to try new habits and even new ideas, find truth as well as error, to begin to hold tightly to that which they find to be authentic. It is my prayer that, by God's grace, I would model the authenticity that is “Non Nobis.” ”

**Barb Carl**  
Logic Faculty Member, Humanities



# Families Transformed Through Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance is one of the heartbeats of Covenant providing access to classical, Christian education to students who could otherwise not afford such a blessing. We are thankful for the dedicated parents and alumni who run fundraising events which provide economic diversity benefiting all who attend The Covenant School.

## By the Numbers



“ In our family, we say that attending Covenant is a privilege. Every day there is a gift. Each year we just don’t see how it will be possible to be at Covenant another year. The generosity of the tuition assistance program is an overwhelming act of grace to our family. We are so very grateful for Covenant and the assistance we receive. ”

Auction Co-Chairs Mie Mie McGowan and Ashleigh Gravlee led an incredible team of volunteers to boogie on down for tuition assistance at the Covenant Disco Auction.





# 1 in 4 Covenant students receive tuition assistance \$375,000 raised through tuition assistance events in 2019 - 2020





# The Whole Student Transformed Through Athletics and the Arts

Co-curricular activities are an integral part of the Covenant education. We call them co-curricular instead of extra-curricular because they are not extra. They are essential to the transforming our students' character through shared experiences, teamwork, and dedication. Over 92% of all Rhetoric students participate in at least one varsity sport. Fine Arts Night is a beautiful culmination of the countless hours spent by our students honing their artistic abilities through drama, choir, oral readings, and visual arts.

**By the Numbers**  
**Approximately \$80,000 raised**  
**through the Covenant Athletic**  
**Booster Club and Friends of the Arts**



- Fine Arts items funded by FOTA in 2019-2020 include:**
- Arts Department Luncheon
  - Laser and 3D Printers
  - Fine Arts Night
  - Gallery Wall
  - Choir Projector

“The Sound of Music marked an inspirational beginning to the 2019-2020 fine arts year. Who could have guessed how many mountains we would need to climb, how many streams to ford before the year was over. The COVID quarantine interrupted school, but it did not interrupt our need for the Arts. In fact, it was the Arts that kept bringing people together. Whether it was a song, a poem, or an instrument, our world found creative ways to share gifts. Fine Arts teachers also responded with creativity – our first Senior Art Show (moved online), Emma streamed live from the Attic, choir students recording parts from home, creative writing sharing stories in a virtual classroom – the list could go on. We are grateful for making Covenant a more creative space, a place where truth, goodness, and BEAUTY are cared for.”

**Brett Tohlen** Director of Curriculum and Instruction







**Athletic items funded by Booster Club in 2019-2020 include:**

- Hudl - Athletic Video Software System and Camera
- Football Team Coaching Headsets
- Track disc nets
- Playoffs team travel expenses
- Cross Country Championship Celebration
- Team uniforms



“ The 2019-2020 athletic year was filled with an array of emotions with joy and prayerfulness. We faced challenges with COVID-19 shelter in place orders and were unable to complete the spring seasons, but our athletes remain resilient. We accomplished great things on the court and athletic fields as we were on pace to secure our fourth consecutive Henderson Cup. However, I am most proud of the spirit and faith of our athletes and coaches throughout. Rather than being sad, they joined together to make the most of the situation with videos, zooms, prayers, and notes to our players and families. It was not a lost year by any stretch of the imagination. Although sad for our seniors and their spring seasons, I wholeheartedly believe Covenant athletics became an even closer family and community!”

**Jesse Olvera**  
Director of Athletics



# Our Future Campus Transformed

## Building the Vision Capital Campaign

The Covenant School is in year two of a three-year, \$9-million capital campaign to build a new Rhetoric building for our high school. As of November 2020, we are thrilled to report that generous partners have committed \$8.2 million to the campaign. Funds will continue to be raised throughout the campaign timeframe of 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Covenant’s campus master planning team is proud to partner with GFF Architects and Skiles Construction on this project. The Rhetoric building ground-breaking took place on August 6, 2020 and projected completion is Fall 2021. For more information about the building project or capital campaign, please contact Jenny Darley, Director of Development, at [jdarley@covenantdallas.com](mailto:jdarley@covenantdallas.com).

By the  
Numbers

**\$8.2 million raised**  
**35,000 square foot building**  
**335 total number of donors**

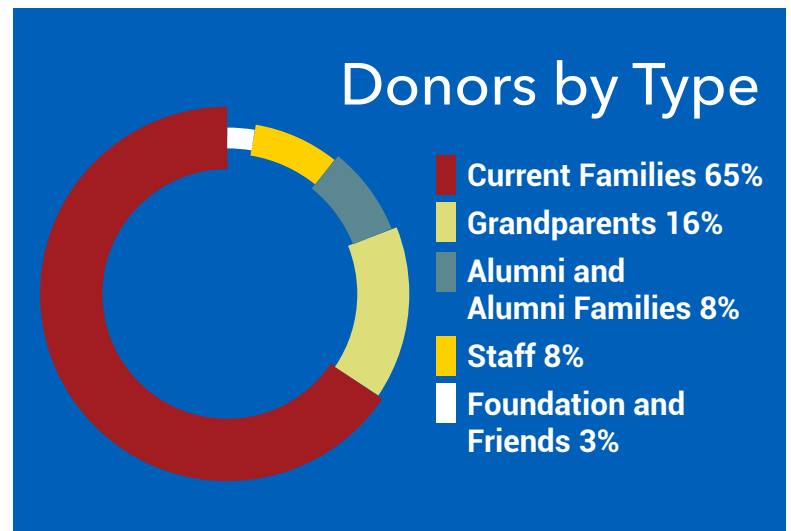




“ This campaign is much bigger than building a building. It’s the right next step in being good stewards with the land God has given our school. ”

**Amy W. Anderson**  
 Campaign Leadership Team and Board of Trustees

Commitment Level	Number of Households
\$1,000,000	1
\$500,000+	1
\$250,000+	8
\$100,000+	17
\$50,000+	16
\$25,000+	20
\$10,000+	51
\$1-\$10,000	221



“ This campaign is not about a building. It’s about making an impact for the kingdom of God. The building is a tool to keep doing what we do well. ”

**Dr. Gregg Hodges**  
 Honorary Campaign Co-Chair and Sustaining Board Member



# Students and Graduates Transformed For Kingdom Service



**Excerpt from Blake Brawner's Valedictorian Speech, Class of 2020** "In other words, education ought to be more than preparation for a standardized test or training to make a profit one day. Rather, it should give us eyes to see clearly the things that merit our loathing and the things that deserve our praise, forming in us habits that we may follow after the latter with zeal. I am so grateful that Covenant puts at the forefront of its education the pursuit of what is good..."







The Covenant School continues the traditions of our founding families in 1993, who desired a Christ-centered, classical, college-preparatory education for their children. Covenant is accredited by Cognia (formerly AdvancED) and is a member of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools and the Society of Classical Learning.

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**Mission Statement**  
To glorify God by equipping students with the tools necessary to pursue a lifetime of learning so that they may discern, reason, and defend truth in service to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**The Covenant School Distinctives**

The purpose of a Covenant education is the formation of an authentic human being. The Covenant curriculum is a soul-shaping endeavor rooted in "The Great Conversation," where students learn to thoughtfully engage each other, their teachers, and great texts in the pursuit of all that is good, true, and beautiful.

**Course Placement:** Students are placed in courses based on academic ambition, test scores, and work ethic in previous courses. Due to the demands of extracurricular athletics, fine arts, and community service activities, juniors and seniors are encouraged to limit their number of AP courses to two per year.

**Latin:** All students must take at least 2 years of Rhetoric School Latin. Students are encouraged to continue to the AP Latin course. Students take the National Latin exam annually, winning the silver Maxima Cum Laude and gold Summa Cum Laude awards regularly.

**Declamation:** Students memorize and perform a four to five minute historical speech or Shakespearean monologue each year.

**Senior Thesis:** Highlighted as the capstone for a classical Christian education, seniors spend their final year researching and writing a 15-page persuasive paper on the topic of their choice. The Senior Thesis project culminates in an oral defense before a panel of judges.

**Arts:** The Fine and Performing Arts are considered a vital part of a classical education. A majority of students surpass the required fine arts credits and continue to pursue both academic and extracurricular arts offerings.

**Schedule:** The Rhetoric School operates on a modified block schedule, with students taking seven courses meeting for a total of 240 minutes each per week. Due to the thesis and rigorous course load, seniors are encouraged to schedule a study hall.

**Covid-19 Response:** The Covenant School transitioned to off-campus learning on 3/26/2020 after an extended spring break. In an effort to stagger device use for families across our K-12 program, Rhetoric classes were held synchronously from 12:30pm-4:15pm daily. The grading scale remained consistent, but the number of graded assessments for the 4th quarter was reduced, and there were no final exams for the spring semester. A review of all grades showed most students ended the 2nd semester with grades comparable to those they received for the 1st semester. Covenant will begin the 2020-2021 school year with in-person instruction on a normal modified block schedule, with a synchronous off-campus learning plan in place for those who choose that option or become ill. All classrooms will be outfitted with KUBi Telepresence Robots to allow students at home full access to classroom instruction.



For a full review of Covenant's Student Profile including course offerings, test scores, and college matriculations, please click on the red arrow.



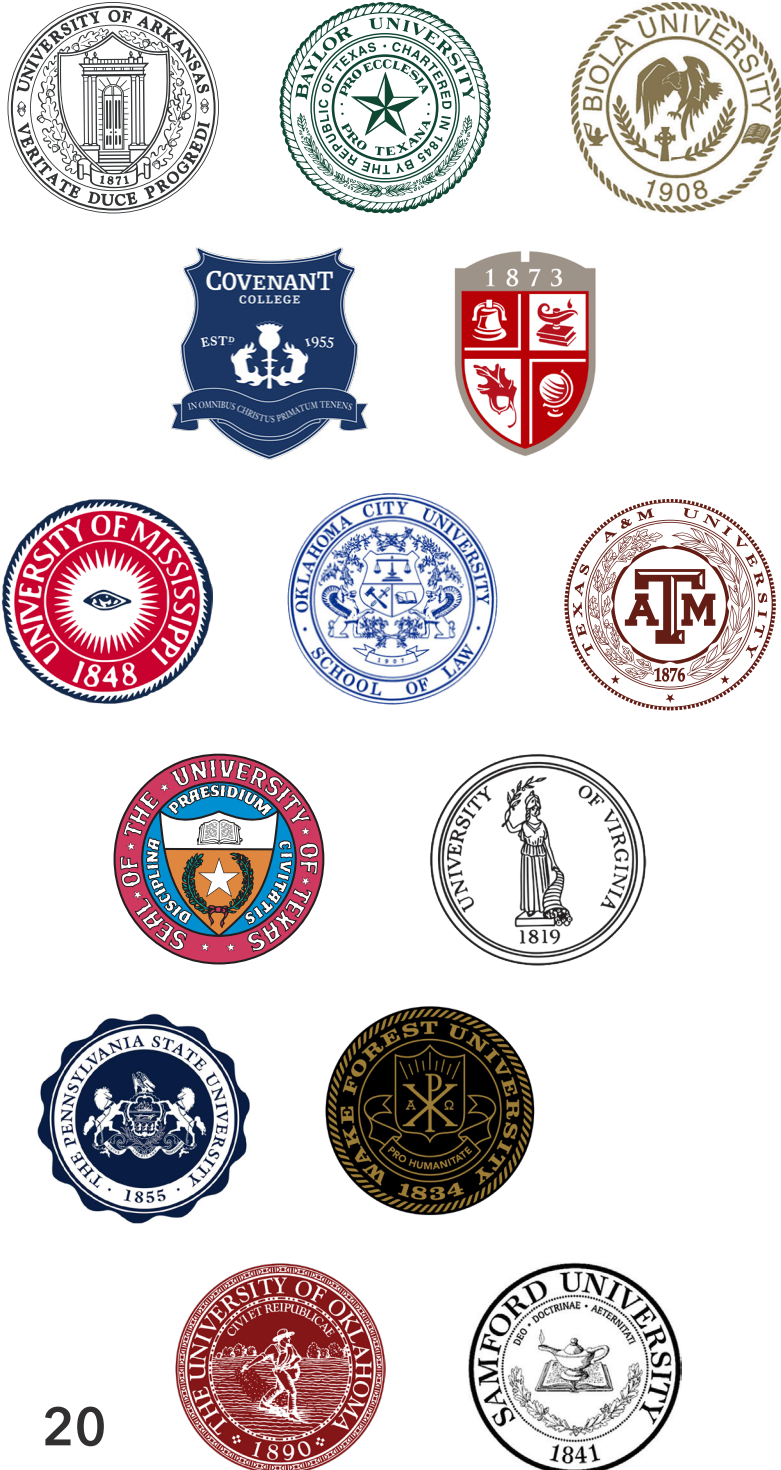
“ Our students arrive on the first day of school in those sweet little uniforms ... wide-eyed and a little unsure about being without their mamas all day. We walk together a day at a time loving, teaching, instilling habits, and hopefully creating a joy for life and learning that will go with them all their days. Our hearts become attached to theirs. We change each other. Then they move on. We watch from afar as they get taller, braver, more humble, wiser ... and we are thankful to have been a small part of their growing up. What a privilege to be one of their earliest teachers! ”

**Kristen Beller**

Mrs. Beller has spent the last 15 years of her 26 year career teaching first graders at Covenant.



# 2020 Covenant Graduates University Enrollment







## By the Numbers

The class of 2020 received 106 total acceptance letters to 30 universities in 11 states. 9 graduates enrolled in university honors programs.



# Transformed by Covenant

## Alumni Quotes



“ Covenant provided a space to ask big questions and the tools to start grappling with them. The dedicated teachers, small classes, and rigorous curriculum enabled me to build a well-rounded foundation. ”

**Ben Bovell-Ammon, Class of 2008**

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Graduate  
Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health Fellowship  
Boston Medical Center, Internal and Preventive Medicine  
Program Resident Physician



“ I will always attribute my academic success to the foundations laid at Covenant. The discipline, logic, and ethics I learned at Covenant not only helped me succeed academically, but also professionally, as these are necessary tools for any healthcare professional. ”

**Aliki Pappas, Class of 2016**

University of Texas at Austin, BS Athletic Training, Coaching Specialization  
Athletic Trainer for Baylor Scott and White Institute for Rehabilitation

“ When I think about how Covenant helped prepare me for where I am today, it seems impossible to put the plethora of experiences down in a few short lines. I do think one of the most valuable gifts I received from Covenant is the community. The same community that helped me sing the timeline song in kindergarten, perform Shakespeare in sixth grade, find a love for sports in middle school, travel the world in high school and walk across the stage at commencement is the same community that has supported me ever since. Through college, grad school and my first real job, this community supported and guided me all along the way. If it were not for the Covenant community (teachers and parents alike) I would not be where I am today. ”



**Palmer Hodges, Class of 2013**

University of Mississippi - English Major with Minors in Italian and Medieval Studies

Durham University (UK) - Masters in Medieval Literature

High School Literature Teacher at Founders Classical Academy of Frisco



# Transformed through Generosity

## Thank You Sponsors

Thank you to our sponsors for partnering with Covenant to advance our mission to glorify God by equipping students with the tools necessary to pursue a lifetime of learning so that they may discern, reason and defend truth in service to our Lord, Jesus Christ. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities at Covenant, please contact Jenny Darley at [jdarley@covenantdallas.com](mailto:jdarley@covenantdallas.com).



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THE  
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Be Transformed

CLASSICAL LEARNING IN LIKE-HEARTED COMMUNITY