



May 2021

## Greetings Covenant Friends – A Unite 2022 Update

Recently Covenant youth from across the denomination gathered for a virtual event called [Unite for Hope](#). Pastor Maurice Cox from Ascent Community Church in Louisville, Colorado, invited us to wrestle with the reality of hope. He boldly reminded us that *biblical hope—the expectation of God’s work—is for **everyone in every season***. This is a powerful word, especially against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic still impacting every area of our lives individually and corporately. This reminder remains true today as we share an update on Unite 2022.

When the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to postpone Unite 2021, we grieved together as a Covenant community. At that time, our team also made a commitment to prayerfully consider possibilities for Unite 2022.

While the pandemic has abated to some degree in North America, as a church family we are still dealing with the painful fallout of Covid-19. Loss of loved ones in our communities, continued financial difficulty in many of our families, and uncertainty surrounding the future have made it nearly impossible to responsibly plan for a 5,000-person event. **While the future for Covenant youth is indeed bright and hopeful, we have come to the difficult decision that moving forward with a traditional Unite event at the University of Tennessee in the summer of 2022 is not feasible at this time.**

Although this is disappointing news, we return our attention to gratitude and hope:

First, **gratitude**: we want to take this opportunity to thank God for the incredible transformational work he has done through CHIC (Unite) at the University of Tennessee (UT) for the past 22 years! UT has been an outstanding and faithful host, and we are so thankful for their partnership in helping the vision for our youth ministry movement become a reality. It may be that we partner with UT again in the future, but this is an important moment for us as a church family to reflect on the past 22 years and to say thanks. If you would like to join us in expressing our gratitude to UT, you can do so using this [Thankbox](#).

And also, **hope**: remembering that hope is for everyone in every season, the Unite Executive Team has entered a renewed process of determining how to best serve our churches and conferences across the Covenant in the summer of 2022. Although we will not have Unite in its traditional form, we will continue to monitor the state of the pandemic and prayerfully discern how else we may join *together* to invest in our youth in 2022. We ask for your prayers as we accelerate the conversation now with the goal of providing an update at [Gather 2021](#) at the end of June. If you have ideas or input that you would like to share with us, please feel free to email us directly at [youth@covchurch.org](mailto:youth@covchurch.org).

We address frequently asked questions below as we navigate this update with local churches and our community. Please know this decision has not been made lightly—but rather with the deepest prayerful care for our entire Covenant family.

Investing in the discipleship of the emerging generation together,

Tim Ciccone  
Director of Youth Ministry  
Make and Deepen Disciples  
The Evangelical Covenant Church

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” —Ephesians 4:3



## Unite 2022 Change FAQs

### **Is the cancellation of the weeklong Unite event permanent or specific to summer of 2022?**

At this time, this decision is for summer of 2022 only, with the hope that a new Unite rhythm can be established in the future.

### **If our church has raised funds to support attendance at Unite 2022, what should we do now?**

Please wait for the Unite update at Gather 2021 before deciding to use those funds for a different ministry opportunity. We are working to determine what options we can provide in light of these complicated times. Thank you for your patience.

### **Does this mean the Covenant does not plan to contract with the University of Tennessee again for Unite?**

This announcement and update is specific to Unite 2022 only. All options will be considered when planning for the future.

### **Does this decision have anything to do with the Covenant's Strategic Alignment Team (SAT) process?**

While the strategic alignment process does impact the entire denomination, this decision is in response to the impact the pandemic has made on our churches, conferences, and denomination. Youth ministry, Unite, and future discipleship opportunities for teenagers are a very high value for the Covenant—please join us in praying over our youth and youth workers!

### **How can we stay connected to future updates on Unite?**

Please check back frequently on our website, [unite2022.org](https://unite2022.org), or follow the Unite social media feeds for the latest updates.