

DECORAH COVENANT CHURCH



Don and Deanne Holmertz

“To multiply disciples of Christ by nurturing healthy relationships and deploying people in ministry”. While Don defined this as his personal vision for ministry over 15 years ago, his ministry goes back to mission trips while in high school and a year as a short term missionary in Alaska, where he served as a youth worker in Anchorage during college. After college he became a youth pastor in Ripon, CA and it was there that his call to full time pastoral ministry was confirmed by prayer, wise counsel and the congregation. His greatest joy is seeing the Word at work in

the lives of others and seeing how people’s lives are changed because of God.

Pastor Don’s primary spiritual gifts are: preaching – introducing people to Jesus and reminding believers of who we are in Christ and our calling to love God and love others; leadership – asking “how do we get on board with what God is doing?; and encouragement - helping people discover and live in the presence of Jesus during a crisis. We also recognize his gifts in administration. His creativity shows up in messages and other venues where he likes to use drama, video, or other tools to help communicate God’s Word.

Pastor Don takes the team approach to ministry. As he sees the gifts, passions and struggles of everyone on the team, he discerns what the appropriate style for providing leadership to that team or individual is. He is energized by helping staff, leaders, churches and ministries connect with one another and with whatever they need to do to do their ministry with fruitfulness and excellence.

Don received his Bachelors degree from North Park College, majoring in Speech/Drama and Urban Studies. He studied at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena and then received a Masters of Divinity from North Park Seminary. After serving for 8 years as a church planter in California, he was called to his present position as Senior Pastor at Valley Evangelical Covenant Church in Stillman Valley, IL in 1990.

While in Stillman Valley, the congregation went through a major renovation project, three capital campaigns, the purchase of land for future relocation, the addition of full-time youth ministry staff, and the birth and growth of a large food pantry/soup kitchen ministry based in the church.

Pastor Don has consistently found ways to serve outside of his congregation and community. During his years in Stillman Valley, he was the Fire Department Chaplain, Boy Scout Troop Committee Chair, served on two Long Range Facility Planning Committees for the school district, acted in the community theatre and helped with production of the high school musical. Wherever he has been, he has engaged in local ministerial groups, projects and events, from a marriage policy task force to finding ways to combine youth ministries.

Also while at Stillman Valley, Don traveled extensively for Mainstay Church Resources, presenting and administering “50 Day Spiritual Adventure” conferences.

In the Covenant denomination, Pastor Don’s ministry has included serving as a District Supervisor, on a camp board, as Chair of the Central Conference Ministerial Association, and on the Conference Human Resources Commission. He has been trained and has served as an NCD (Natural Church Development – www.ncd-international.org) Coach.

This month he will be trained to be a Vitality coach for the Covenant's Department of Congregational Vitality. (www.covchurch.org/cge/departmental-ministries/established-church-ministries)

Pastor Don's particular interest in Biblical studies is in "wholeness in Christ:" how it happens and how it gets fleshed out in life, ministry and church leadership. This has led to extensive training and study in church health, mediation skills, and family systems theory.

Don credits his experiences, training and activities outside the congregational family as an important part of keeping himself and his ministry fresh, broadening and deepening his faith and his Biblical understanding, and engaging new perspectives.



Don grew up in the Covenant Church and has been married to Deanne for 31 years. They have a son, Brian, and a daughter, Beth and son-in-law, Joel. His personal interests include travel, running, golf, skiing, biking, history and home improvement. Deanne loves to read, bake, work on home improvement and decorating projects, and minister to children.

(The Holmertz family - from left to right: Joel, Beth, Don, Deanne, Brian)

Pastoral Search Committee Update

(Committee Members: Troy Vande Lune (Chair), Storm Bailey, Andrea Carlson, Del Fure, Stephanie Huber, Jennifer Thompson)

In April of 2009 the pastoral search committee was formed to search for the next pastor for Decorah Covenant Church. We started with asking the congregation to fill out a survey to identify such things as the churches strengths and weaknesses, dreams and qualities our next pastor should possess. Below is a summary of those findings.

Our strengths at Decorah Covenant Church are numerous, but the strengths that stood out for many are that we are a family-oriented church that values our youth and our time together – whether it be in worshiping God, serving others in and outside of our church, or growing in our faith through Biblical sermons and our Christian Education classes. Many responded that the reason they made Decorah Covenant their home was because they felt welcome and enjoyed the blend of contemporary and traditional styles of worship. We also wanted a church that would challenge us in our faith.

Areas where Decorah Covenant Church could improve would be to have better communication from the leadership and various ministry areas. Our mission as a church needs to be developed. Some ideas of what our mission might be are that we need to reach out to the people in Decorah who grew up in a church but have fallen away, our college students and our youth – not just those of the congregation but the community's youth as a whole.

Many indicated they wanted a pastor that has leadership and pastoral experience. The top 5 areas of pastoral ministry most important for us to have in a pastor were preaching, Bible knowledge, youth and family, pastoral care and community involvement. We recognized the need for a pastor who will enhance and help continue developing strong lay leadership. With much prayer and discernment we have studied numerous pastoral candidate profiles and had many phone conversations with candidates. After meeting and spending time with Don and Deanne, the search committee is confident in the strength of Don's candidacy. We encourage you to come and meet them the weekend of July 10th – 11th. Please watch for more details on the events planned for the candidate weekend.