



January 31, 2023

Dear Covenant College Community,

After a season of prayerful discernment with family and trusted friends, I have informed the Board of Trustees that I will complete my presidential service to Covenant College on June 30, 2023. The Board has offered me, and I have accepted, the opportunity to become the founding director of Covenant's new Brock-Barnes Center for Leadership. I am honored to continue to serve Covenant and its students in the name of two of the college's most beloved leaders—men who also played important leadership roles in the church and in the Chattanooga community.

I first visited Covenant as a sixteen-year-old and enrolled a year later. In subsequent years, I fell in love with the college. I was inspired by the faculty's commitment to serious Christian scholarship and outstanding teaching. I found the Christ-centered community on Covenant's campus to be both life-giving and life-transforming. My student experience at Covenant shaped me in profound ways, and my love for the college has only deepened as I have served as president—particularly now that I am also a Covenant parent.

Serving Covenant College as its president is one of the greatest honors and privileges of my life. After Jesus Christ and his church, my family, and my closest friends (whom I met at Covenant), I could not love any person or institution more. I am extremely grateful for the people who make up the Covenant College community. My family and I have been blessed in numerous ways by members of this community, both on and off the mountain. We are especially thankful for the support provided by faculty and staff, the enthusiasm for learning and service that students have demonstrated, and the encouragement provided by alumni and other friends of the college. It has been our joy to be loved by you all.

I have spent fourteen years—the last eleven of those at Covenant—in a role that makes a total claim on every aspect of a person's life. During this time, my family has made significant sacrifices. They have done so willingly because they, too, love Covenant. But, as I have considered the remaining years of my life and work, I find myself eager to spend more time with Wendy, with my family, and with friends. After years of operating in high gear, I would like to develop a healthier balance in my life.

I have also found myself longing to engage more directly in what drew me to higher education in the first place: the development of students through the craft of teaching and scholarship. Furthermore, I believe that every institution benefits from periodic renewals of leadership. As I look to the



college's future, it is my sense that the time has come for fresh energy and vision that can lead the college into its next phase of growth and development.

Covenant is blessed with a Board that includes numerous gifted and experienced trustees who have already initiated work on a presidential transition. Under their capable oversight, the college is in steady hands. I am confident the Board is well-equipped and well-prepared to oversee the transition and find the next person God is calling to serve as the president of Covenant College. I will give my full support to the trustees and the search committee in this effort and to the future leadership of the college. I am eager to see how God will prosper the college I love under the next president's stewardship.

Having navigated a tumultuous season in our country and in higher education, Covenant is poised for years of vitality. The college is blessed with the best Christian college faculty in the country, outstanding senior administrators, and a talented and committed staff. With the challenges of recent years behind us and these people in place, I believe that the college's best years are yet to come, and I am eager to see how God will bless this institution—and through it, the church and the world. In the months that remain in my tenure, I will continue to be fully engaged in advancing the mission of the college, and particularly in the recruiting of students and raising of support for the college.

I am profoundly grateful to the Board of Trustees for entrusting me with the privilege and responsibility of serving for the last eleven years as the president of Covenant College. I am deeply thankful to the Covenant College community for the care it has shown to my family and me, and I look forward to continuing to serve the college that has blessed us in so many ways.

We love you, Covenant College. Go Scots!

In Christ,

J. Derek Halvorson ('93), Ph.D.