

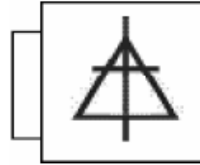
2008's Thanksgiving Special Offering

At COS we've embraced a tradition for Thanksgiving Day. Our pastor offers a short meditation and then invites us to express our gratitude to each other. Person after person goes to the front to give thanks, one for a new job, one for a new baby, another for fresh hope or a reconciled relationship. As we heap thanksgiving on top of thanksgiving, our joy increases. On Thanksgiving Day, we sing the closing hymn with great feeling and vitality. This is a parable. And every week we underline it when person after person goes forward to offer praise to God by placing something in the offering bowl out of gratitude for the Lord's goodness.

It has also become a tradition of the deacons every year at Thanksgiving to present the congregation with a recipient whom we will support in a special way that year. While this is not meant to prevent people from designating where they wish their offerings to go, the cause the deacons have chosen for this year is the ministry of Coit Community Church:

For some years, Church of the Servant has partnered with Coit in a close relationship, sharing pastors and congregation in worship, but also sharing the work of anti-racism and reconciliation. We have financially supported them in their ministry throughout recent years, especially with our special offerings at Thanksgiving.

While in the past, we have supported Coit through our general budget (usually in the amount of an \$8000 line-item), in 2008 we chose to meet our pledge of support by special offerings and designated gifts. And, of the \$8000 we had hoped to give to Coit's ministries, nearly \$5000 has already been collected!



Coit Community Church

Just off the Medical Mile of Grand Rapids, Coit Church provides healing and comfort as a "hospital of the Lord Jesus Christ", reaching out to those who are hurting and feel abandoned in an increasingly troubled world. Coit has a diverse congregation, combining many races and ethnic backgrounds in worship and ministry, their mission is to bring reconciliation to our world, especially in their local area of Coit & Belknap, where they purposely seek to bring a presence of Christ into their community by encouraging participation but also integration of all into a people of God, in life, work and worship.

Coit Church is deeply involved on a local level in many different ways—we hear about these through their occasional newsletters, but here's a quick look at some of the areas where God is working through this small but vibrant inner-city congregation:

- 2 Sunday worship services
- Men's and Women's Bible studies which are consistently well attended
- Youth ministry including GEMS and Cadets (which was very active in the initial formation of the church itself)
- Van ministry, enabling those without resources to come and participate in the life of the church
- Healthy Marriages/Healthy Relationships. This is a combined public/private project which seeks to maintain and increase the level of paternal support in the lives of children, both financially and emotionally, as well as decreasing the potential of domestic violence

Coit is an urban church. Many members have been saved by God from drugs, alcohol addiction, crime, and other hardships. But all these enable them to display the full spectrum of God's redemptive love as they truly come together from varied and diverse origins, embraced as one family, and share their walk with God as a true Christian community. Please support them as a Thanksgiving for the gift of our Lord, Jesus Christ.