

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

*First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
741-7117*

www.firstcovenantvirginia.org

**Volume XL - Number 8
Fall 2016**

“Stuff”

Do you want to discover a truly liberating view of the “stuff” we have in our lives? It’s pretty simple—be responsible for deciding what to do with a parent’s stuff when they are no longer able to deal with it.

When my mother made her final move to an assisted living facility, she did not have the ability to take on sorting through a household of possessions—nor the mental, physical, or emotional strength. And when it was apparent that she would never return to independent living, I rented a dumpster, parked it in her driveway, and spent four days tossing the residue of a life into it. We wanted to sell the house—she needed the income to help fund her care—so the place had to be empty.

I started the winnowing process, and most of my siblings came a day later. We saved a few sentimental pieces, a couple of chests my grandfather had made, a few knickknacks that were either nostalgic or valuable. Some of what she owned went to the local church thrift store—dishes, silverware, utensils—things that looked serviceable.

One group of items that we quickly tossed was upholstered furniture. We figured that the living room set was nearly six decades old. It wasn’t of high quality to begin with and had been sad and sagging for a long, long time. There were boxes and boxes of books—your standard inexpensive paperbacks, now decades old. Not even the used bookstore in town wanted them

And then the dumpster was full. That was the sum total of the stuff that two people, my father and mother, had spent a lifetime accumulating. It was a sad moment, but one of great instructional value, at least to me.

In the end, that’s what will happen to all of our stuff. Sure, a few pieces will get passed along to the next generation. Maybe. (If I collected enough gold ingots, I bet those would be saved.) But for the most part, rust and decay and rot will overtake every one of our most prized earthly possessions.

I don’t mean to be depressing. However, this purging pointed out to me the futility of holding on to things too tightly. You can’t take it with you. It will stay behind and become your offsprings’ headache.

As the Bible says, store up treasures in heaven. Do God’s work. Witness, Live a cheerful life. Smile. Make pleasant memories. Live as Jesus would have you live. Be generous in all things. Show God’s grace in all that you do.

And don’t worry about your stuff.

—Jim Kraus

FIRST COVENANT CHURCH PURPOSE STATEMENT

The mission of First Covenant Church is
to worship God,
equip people to live in faith,
share God's love,
and serve the community around us.

SERVING CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

Ushers:

Aug. 21—Ken & Linda Pogorelec
Aug. 28—Roger & Gail Johnston
Sept. 4—Shirley Koski
& Darlene Reindahl
Sept. 11—Linda Skogman
Sept. 18—Roger & Judy Linden
Sept. 25—Lloyd & Muriel Stanaway

Nursery Attendants:

Aug. 21—Linda Pogorelec
Aug. 28—Shirley Koski
Sept. 4—Jodie Phaneuf
Sept. 11—Gail Johnston
Sept. 18—Julie Hill
Sept. 25—Audrey Branstrom

Sound Technicians:

Aug. 21—Mike Hannay
Aug. 28—Roger Johnston
Sept. 4—Mike Hannay
Sept. 11—Roger Johnston
Sept. 18—Mike Hannay
Sept. 25—Roger Johnston

CALENDAR AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items need to be submitted by Sunday, September
18th,

2ND QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT 4/1/16-6/30/16

Checking account balance as April 1st: **\$210.06**
General Fund income for the quarter:
\$16,1956.15
Other income: **\$460.99**
Rental income: **\$325.00**
Total expenses for the quarter: **\$17,362.00**
Checking account balance as of June 30th:
\$785.20

COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES

We will meet for our first project day on Tuesday,
[September 20th](#). We have lap robes to tie and lap
robes ready to sew. We also hope to wrap the boxes
for Operation [Christmas Child](#).

Ladies Lunch will be held at Jue's at noon on [Tues-
day, September 6](#). In October we will begin meeting
monthly at Ranger Rock in the Mt. Iron High
School. Join us for an informal time of visiting with
each other.

Women's Retreat will be held at Covenant Park
Bible Camp on [September 16-18](#). The theme is "Fit
for a Crown". Our group is responsible for decora-
tions and bathroom baskets. Registration forms are
available on line and in the foyer.

Do you have any craft items to donate to Extended
Reach Ministries? Kate Wagenbach, our spring Sal-
ad Supper speaker, will be participating in fall craft
sales raising money for orphans in Romania.

TRIENNIAL XV

On July 28-31st in Kansas City, the city of fountains, a group of 17 Covenant women and friends had the privilege of attending “Quench,” [http://www.centurylink.net/Triennial XV](http://www.centurylink.net/TriennialXV). We were so blessed to be able attend a wonderful conference that allowed us to connect, refresh, and transform. This was a momentous year for the women in the Covenant. Together we celebrated 100 years of women's ministries and 40 years of ordaining women. It was inspiring to see the wonderful Covenant Women leaders. We took advantage of meaningful learning experiences, exciting excursions, special evening receptions, interactive features in the exhibit area, a beautiful global marketplace, a fabulous prayer area, and two big anniversary celebrations. We were enriched by the inspiring messages of special women and international guests sharing their spiritual life. Many of us participated in the Fun Run, a fundraiser for Lycee Vanette, a school empowering girls of the Congo. We were also blessed with the worship team that presented wonderful inspirational and motivating music. We were encouraged to quench deeply & be filled to overflowing so we could grow in our relationship with God and with the people in our community. Triennial was a perfect opportunity for God to meet us and challenge us in deep ways. We want to thank our church family for your help, prayers, and support in making this trip possible.

—Linda Pogorelec

MESABI RANGE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

The week I spent counseling at Covenant Park was the most powerful week of camp I've been a part of. I was asked by the speaker to lead worship after one of his talks, and through the music and words we shared about 70 of the 90 teens came forward to make a visual commitment to be “all in” for Christ! I sent my guitar aside and went and prayed with many

different boys for 30-45 minutes. Also, our cabin had very deep meaningful conversations. I challenged them to be open and vulnerable, and some of the boys shed tears while sharing with each other. We'd have them come into the center of the room and lay hands on them to pray for them. Hubi, Sam, and Jared said they'd never had a better week of camp. Their reason was because Jesus worked in their hearts so much!

—Matt Socha

YFC PEACH SALE

The second shipment of peaches is scheduled to arrive on August 18th and will be available for sale until the 21st or as long as the supply lasts. The truck in Virginia will be in the Miners Memorial parking lot.

ADVENTUROUS CHRISTIANS

We are deeply grateful for the faithful service of Mike & Nicole Nelson, who have served as the Directors of Adventurous Christians for ten years.

Mike & Nicole responded to God's call to Adventurous Christians in 2006. Earlier this summer, they finished their tenure after ten years of faithful ministry. In that time they have served God's kingdom in countless ways. They have discipled summer staff, led hundreds of people on camping trips, improved the facilities at AC, bolstered the canoe trips program, developed relationships with dozens of churches and families, made thousands of cups of coffee, cooked hundreds of meals, and performed any other duty that was needed. They did all this through laughter and smiles.

Covenant Pines Ministries is incredibly grateful for their work over these ten years. The many people who experienced the power of God because of their work are thankful as well.

COVENANT KIDS CONGO UPDATE

Bernadette and her husband, Serge Jackson, can watch their children grow up healthy thanks to a nearby kiosk supplying clean water from a deep water well system. In a remote area of DR Congo where clean water used to be rare, their family now only needs to walk a few minutes for safe drinking water.

This clean water access became a reality through Covenant Kids Congo, a strategic partnership between The Evangelical Covenant Church, World Vision, and local Congolese churches like the Covenant Church of Congo (CEUM). Through this partnership and the hard construction and maintenance work of the Congolese people, two deep water well systems have been implemented, and a third one will be on the way later this year.

In the city of Gemena located in northwest Congo, two deep borehole wells have been drilled. Between these wells and local capped springs, a total of 24,000 people now receive clean and accessible water.

A WORD FROM THE SWANSONS

June 24, 2016, was a very significant day for me. I was reactivated as a long term missionary with the Evangelical Covenant Church at the Annual Meeting/Gather in Phoenix, AZ. After 12 years of pastoral ministry at the Antwerp International Protestant Church in Belgium, I have now joined Barb and the Covenant Mosaics team in Europe, reaching out to refugees and immigrants with the gospel of Jesus Christ. During this year of home assignment, Minneapolis will be our home. We look forward to traveling to many local Covenant congregations and sharing about the amazing work God is already doing in Europe, bringing men and women from all backgrounds and religious traditions to Himself. What some people call a crisis is also an opportunity to share the gospel in word and deed!

We plan to return to Europe in 2017 and will re-settle in Malmö, Sweden. We will join our Covenant part-

ners in the Uniting Church of Sweden (formerly the Swedish Covenant Church) to reach out to the “New Swedes”—the term that they use to identify the refugees and immigrants who are getting permission to stay in Sweden. We'll keep you updated as our plans become clearer. Right now we ask you to pray with us for additional supporters to join us in prayer and in financial giving.

Everything is so new right now ~ new ministry partners, new husband to our niece, “new” car (new to us, though it's an old Buick and we call it the grandpa car, but it works well!), new tires on the grandpa car as we took it on our first trip from Chicago to Minneapolis, new drivers' licenses, new address (Barb is particularly challenged to remember the zip code!) , new cell phone numbers to memorize, new traditions to get used to in America. We are embracing the new, as we figure out it will part of our reality and life for a long while yet to come. We have a new ministry location to get ready for ~ **Sweden!** We have a new ministry team to pray for as we wait to get to Sweden, and new friends to welcome into our lives, both here in the US and in Sweden. We also have a new language to learn ~ Minnesota is a great place to land if you want to learn Swedish. We've already signed up as members of the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis and look forward to taking Swedish classes as our travel and speaking schedule allows. Here we go again!

—Steve Swanson

COVENANT TRUST COMPANY

One of the reasons the Evangelical Covenant Church owns a trust company is that they saw a need in the church for the many investment, estate planning, and financial management services that a trust company can provide. This includes trustee services.

A trust is a legal relationship established when a person transfers assets to a trustee, who then agrees to manage those assets solely for the benefit of the beneficiaries named in the document.

Basically, when you create a trust, you say four things to the trustee:

- Here are certain assets. Manage them for me according to my direction.

- Make payments to me from this trust at I direct.

- If I become unable to look after my own affairs, take care of my financial needs and those of my spouse and dependents.

- When I pass away, either continue to manage these assets for my spouse and dependents, or distribute the assets, according to my instructions in the trust agreement.

Individuals also use trusts when they want to give a gift to someone but control the use of the gift, like setting up a trust to be used for the education of grandchildren. Special trusts can be created for the supplemental needs of individuals on disability.

Trusts can take the burden of managing finances off of those not prepared to manage money or those without the time. The trustee will invest the trust assets, pay bills and expenses, and provide a statement of all trust activity so their actions are transparent. This can be a valuable service for a surviving spouse left to handle finances on their own.

A trust is different from a will as a trust allows for the management of your financial life both before and after death. You have complete control to distribute what you have put in your trust in whatever way you want. You can create a plan to provide resources to family or others that can be managed long after you are gone.

At CTC, our goal is to create the opportunity for people to do what they are called to do. We want to empower people to be generous with their lives in whatever way they feel called. Serving as trustee for our clients is one of the many ways we are able to this. For more information on trusts and the rest of our services, contact Steve Allison, your local Financial Services Representative, at 218-297-7701 or email him at srallison@covenanttrust.com.

THANK YOU NOTES

We would like to thank the members of the congregation for all the well-wishes, cards, and gifts given to us on the occasion of Roger's retirement. The gnome given to us from the congregation has found a home in the family room near the fireplace. The lunch reception and community farewell were wonderful, providing times when we were able to share on a more personal level with many of you and others from the community. Thanks again for your kind words of appreciation.

We continue to get settled in our new home in Red Wing. It has been a huge task. We want to say a special word of thanks to Roger and Gail and Barb and Darrell, whose help during the moving process was invaluable. You guys are the best!

If you are ever in our area, please give us a call as we are ready to welcome visitors.

May God continue to guide you as you carry on His work in Virginia.

Pastor Roger and Marjean

Dear Members of 1st Covenant Church,

Thank you for the beautiful baby blanket! It is so lovely and must have taken a long time to complete. We will definitely use it this fall as we welcome our little girl. Thank you dearly for thinking of us during this special time in our lives. We are truly touched.

With love,
Jonathan & Molly Johnson

Dear Family and Friends of First Covenant Church. Thank you does not seem to be enough for all the baking and helping out at the Benefit for Tim and Sarah. With all the hands we had, the evening went off without a hitch. The bake sale took in over \$700. We still do not have a final count, but it should be over \$20,000. This is wonderful! This will help with lodging, food and medical expenses not covered. Surgery is still not scheduled, but we are hoping for the fall. God bless you all. It is so great to have such a wonderful caring church family.

Tim, Roger, Gail
Sarah, Steve and Linda

1st Covenant Church:

Thank you for thinking of us as we begin this new journey in life. The quilt is fantastic and will keep Christian warm during our wonderful winters!

Thanks again!
Lucas, Cassie, & Christian

Dear First Covenant Church,

Thank you for supporting me on my mission trip to Ecuador! My support goal was reached! We partnered with Amstad ("Friendship") Covenant Church in an urban area of Guayaquil. The church there is very vibrant and active and operates a school for close to 1600 students. We hosted morning chapter services for the students each day as well as helping with conversational English classes in the language lab. We also hosted a school-wide "Minnesota culture" assembly one day. In the afternoons we headed to three different neighborhood outreach sites in poorer neighborhoods where the church is seeking to establish a presence with Bible studies and community outreach initiatives. We also hosted children's activities.

Thanks for your support!
Josh Jones

I am writing to thank you for your donation to Habitat for Humanity, Because of your donation I was able to bike for a wonderful cause. I had so much fun on the ride and met so many nice people along the way, I am also wanting to do this again next year, Again thank you of everything you do for Habitat for Humanity.

Love,
April Paschke

Virginia Covenant:

Thank you so much for donating the ping pong table to Covenant Park Bible Camp. We enjoy having it available for campers to use in the game room area, especially on rainy days! Thank you for your partnership and investment in camp as it continues to be a place "where friend meets friend and both meet God."

Kaela and CPBC Staff

Thank you from the Mountain Iron-Buhl class of 2016 for your donation to our all-night chemical-free grad party. We appreciate your generous support!

The Virginia Fire Department would like to express our sincere thanks for your financial support of our Fire Safety Education Program. You have recognized that we desperately need to reach our children with accurate emergency code and vital facts that will educate them and help them grow as safe, happy, and responsible citizens. The materials we have carefully selected were developed by the National Fire Safety Council, Inc.. Without your help we would not have been able to provide these materials to the children of our area.

Allen Lewis, Fire Chief

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Judy Linden 19th
Linda Pogorelec 30th

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Kate Barnes 8th
Shirley Koski 14th
Greg Barnes 26th

AMONG US

We extend Christian sympathy to **Heather Jones** and her family on the death of her father, retired Covenant pastor Robert Wood, who died on July 30th.

Congratulations to **Linda Pogorelec** on her retirement from the surgery department at Virginia Regional Medical Center following 30 years of service.

Addition to your church directory: **Jeffrey and Heather Jones**, 209 W. 2nd Ave. N., Aurora, MN 55705. Home phone: 218-229-0459. E-mail: selahjr-jones@gmail.com (Jeffrey) and jones.heather@outlook.com

Dan Johnston is now the lead emergency communication specialist of St. Louis County 911. **Paul Johnston** is general manager for Culligan in Cloquet. **Tim Johnston** is the number-two man at the Coke plant in Virginia.