

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER



First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
741-7117

www.firstcovenantvirginia

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PASTOR'S PEN

Deeper In Christ Further in Mission

I am still savoring the wonderful service we experienced on Christmas Eve. Thanks to all who played a part in both the reading of the Scriptures and the leading of music. All the special music was the icing on the cake. Christmas Eve was about all of us who came together to celebrate the wonderful gift God gave to us through his son and our Lord, Jesus the Christ.

As we enter into 2018, we enter into a new season in the life and ministry of First Covenant Church. We have been talking about it, and now the time has come to begin a conversation as to the next steps for our church. But in order for this to truly be effective and meaningful, it will be all of us who come together and be a part of exploring and discovering God's will for us in 2018. This includes not only

members, but also friends of the church who have made First Covenant their home.

We begin this journey by holding forth one of the mottos of the Covenant: *Deeper in Christ; Further in Mission*. This motto has been around for a while and it reminds us there are two aspects of church identity. The first is the cultivating of a relationship with God in Christ and others; the second is developing relevant ministry in the church and in the world. One must partake of both aspects in order to be the church God desires us to be. It is both our united life in Christ and God's ministry we pursue in 2018.

You are invited to be a part of this conversation, which will happen on Sunday mornings through our Worship Celebration as we commence with a sermon series on being a true disciple of Jesus Christ. We will seek to understand just what is a disciple and what is expected in being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Then after coffee and fellowship time, we will meet together around the tables in the fellowship hall for what will be called *Conversations for a New Normal (CNN)*. This will be a time for group interaction from what we already heard in Worship or the instruction given in the class. It will be a time to discern what is to be the new normal for us. Do you know that each generation must discover what God

is up to and join him in his work? Each generation is different from the previous generation. Each generation must ask the hard questions of how to be effective and relevant in the world that continually changes. Having said this, maybe we should call the gathering *Conversations for the Next Generation*.

As your pastor who will lead you in this next season, I want to strongly encourage everyone to join in the conversation. Plan to be a part of both Worship and CNN on Sunday mornings. Remember, *it is all of us who come together* that will make the difference for the sake of the gospel continuing to be proclaimed through this church.

-- Pastor Dennis

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:

Jan. 7—Roger & Gail Johnston
Jan. 14—Shirley Koski & Darlene Reindahl
Jan. 21—Linda Skogman
Jan. 28—Roger & Judy Linden
Feb. 4—Lloyd & Muriel Stanaway

Church Caretakers for the week of . . .

Jan. 7-13—Roger & Gail Johnston
Jan. 14-20—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen
& Audrey Branstrom
Jan. 21-27—Jeffrey & Heather Jones
Jan. 28-Feb. 3—Shirley Koski & Barb Knapper

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

11/1/17-11/30/17

Checking account balance as Nov.. 1st: **\$15,704.52**

General Fund income for current period: **\$6391.00**

Other income: **\$84.35**

Total expenses for current period: **\$6665.43**

Checking account balance as of Nov. 30th:

\$16,082.09

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

Beginning in January, rather than the I-Board and the O-Board meeting separately each month, the two boards and the financial officers will meet jointly the second Wednesday of each month. The first such meeting will be on Wednesday, the 10th, at 6:30 p.m.. when we will review the church budget and make recommendations to the annual meeting for the 2018 budget.

CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 28th. It is very important that all members and friends of the church be present as we review the work of the church over the past year and look forward to our ministry in the new year, including adopting a budget. Reports from church boards, organizations, and financial reports need to be turned in **no later than Sunday, January 21st** to allow for preparation of the annual report booklet.

COVENANT PARK ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of Covenant Park Bible Camp will be held on Saturday, January 20th at Gethsemane Covenant Church in Duluth. Brunch will be served at 9:30 a.m., followed by the meeting. This is our camp, so it would be good if our church could be represented as the past summer is reviewed and plans for the coming year are discussed.

COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES

This month we will not be meeting for Project Day, but we have scheduled a time for cleaning the kitchen. We will meet at 9:00 on Tuesday, January 23. We made a good start the last time but need to complete the job.

Ladies Lunch will meet on the 2nd at Jue's but then will move to Ranger Rock for February through May.



We mailed 14 dresses to McKenna Kindt, granddaughter of Linda & Steve Skogman, to take on mission trip to Haiti. We received the following note from her:

"I can't thank you ladies enough for the beautiful

dresses, They were brought to a Special Needs Orphanage and handed out. I was only able to get a few pictures but please know how special these dresses were to these children. This orphanage houses about 25 children with a variety of physical and mental ailments. However, these circumstances haven't hindered their joy in the least. While there, we had the opportunity to worship alongside these children, play with them, and just love on them. There is a huge orphan epidemic in Haiti—70% of Haitian children are in orphanages and of that number, 80% still have parents. The majority of orphanages take advantage of this and exploit children. This orphanage was in no way like that. It was started by a Haitian pastor and his wife and is

supported by funds here in America. They provide a loving home where the children receive everything they need. Again, thank you so much for showing these children the love of Christ by providing them with these dresses."

Blessings, McKenna Kindt



Dear Friends of Covenant Park,

2017 is a year that I will remember as one that continually taught me and allowed us as the camp community to "taste and see that the Lord is good" in more ways than we could have asked or imagine. Although the year started with the perception that it was going to be one of challenges and uncertainty, God often uses those situations to reveal His generous heart and sovereign hand. We have so much to be thankful for this year end! And much to move toward and anticipate with excitement in the days ahead! We are seeing God move in amazing ways, and are so thankful for the partnership that continues to grow with our churches and individuals within the Covenant Park community.

I am pleased to report that the financial changes put in place for this year, along with an incredible amount of increased support in various ways, have begun to move Covenant Park toward better health and vitality. While this process will take time, as well as an understanding that we have a long way to go, we can confidently say we have made great steps in the right direction in 2017 regarding the financial demands of running this ministry and caring for the facilities.

This spring a few of our churches adopted three significant projects, and over the course of the summer we watched a basketball court, a new cabin, and a new canteen/store develop. We also were able to add some upgraded equipment to

the waterfront, refinish the dining hall floor, and continue with some cosmetic upgrades in the North House and Bunkhouse. God provided a tremendous volunteer force this year to fill a number of needs both to prepare camp and help things run smoothly throughout the camper weeks and retreats!

God's provision for many physical needs has been amazing. But He continues to bring people to camp to meet the spiritual needs of our hurting world as well. At Covenant Park, relationships are a huge core piece of our culture. God uses those relationships formed at camp to strengthen, encourage, challenge, and even bring people to Him for the first time. As our staff intentionally modeled this last summer with each other and with campers, we saw God bring together the conversations and interactions at just the right time and place to be incredibly meaningful. We rejoice in 13 campers that gave their life to Christ for the first time, as well as so many more who have received hope, taken steps to dive deeper in their faith, and left their weights and hurts behind.

As we move into the new year, there are some exciting things on the horizon as well! With a new cabin 8 in place, we are moving forward with the rebuilding of the Lakeside cabin and bath facilities. The next step will be to add a new cabin 7 as the second phase of the Lakeside cabin-plex, which will eventually house a meeting space, bathrooms, and cabins 5-8 in one building. You can read more about this vision at covenantpark.org. Our goal for cabin 7 is to have it fully funded and the volunteer help in place to complete it by the summer 2018 camp season. Thanks to our annual fundraiser dinner, this second cabin is nearly funded. As we continue to fundraise, additional funds will go towards new bunks in this cabin and the other portions of the cabin-plex building. We also have some exciting program offerings in the works for 2018; stay tuned as more information will be available soon!

God uses so many people to further this work. We are so thankful for all of you that partner with us through prayer, volunteerism, and financial support. We invite all of you to join us in this New Year, and take the opportunity to participate in what God is doing at Covenant Park. Would you consider partnering financially even now to help us continue

to move forward in 2018? For your convenience, use the button below to give online. There are several projects outlined at covenantpark.org/give that we are currently working toward. Any amount is greatly appreciated, as God uses all of us together to support the continuation of camp's ministry. You may also be interested in volunteering for the cabin rebuild or another area this coming camp season. Please contact Kaela for updates on current needs. Your gifts allow for camp to continue to be cared for and developed as a place "where friend meets friend and both meet God" and lives are forever changed!

In it together,
Kaela Strom, Director

COVENANT TRUST COMPANY

Planning Your Legacy

Galatians 6 says we will reap what we sow, but we don't always reap and sow in the same season. Legacy Planning is based on a similar principal. Our time on Earth is limited, but with proper planning, our actions and decisions can have an impact that transcends our time here. Our legacies - the lives we touch; the wisdom, values, and traditions we share with others; the ministries that continue due to our support can affect the world beyond our lifetime. Covenant Trust Company (CTC) believes everyone has a legacy. What will yours be? If you're not sure, here are some of our tools that can help you take control of the legacy you leave behind.

Trustee services

CTC can serve as trustee or successor trustee for various types of trusts. Generally, trusts can be used to build wealth and designate family, friends, and charities as beneficiaries. Revocable Living Trusts, in particular, are great for Legacy Planning as they allow people to establish for whom the trust will provide, to what extent, and for how long. As trustee, CTC can manage assets in a trust even after you pass.

Wills

With a will, you can ensure your plans for your family and assets are carried out. A will can determine legal

guardianship of children and name friends and charities along with family as beneficiaries of your estate.

Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)

A CGA is an irrevocable contract between a donor and a charity. If, for example, you funded a gift annuity with First Covenant Church as a beneficiary, CTC would act as trustee of those funds and make fixed payments to you for the rest of your life. Afterward, First Covenant Church would receive the remainder of the fund. CTC is able to facilitate these agreements on behalf of all Covenant ministries.

Other legacy planning options

Discover how you can sow seeds today for future generations to reap. Contact any one of the Financial Service Representatives serving the Northwest Conference to learn more about our legacy planning, estate planning, and investment management services.

Steve Allison
Financial Services Rep
Client Services Rep
218-297-7701
srallison@covenanttrust.com

THANK YOU NOTE

Dear Brothers & Sisters of First Covenant,
Thanks a million for the caroling visit the other day. This was totally unexpected but so enjoyed. You are all so precious, so thank you for remembering me! The cookies were very good, the poinsettia beautiful and a wonderful idea. I only hope to join you one day soon. May you all have a blessed season and a Happy New Year!

Love to all,
Carolyn Erickson

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Gail Johnston 6th
Ed Pajunen 31st

AMONG US

We extend Christian sympathy to **Lloyd Stanaway** and family on the death of his brother David, who died unexpectedly at the age of 77 on December 8th. His funeral service was held on December 12th at Peace United Methodist Church.

Former member of our church **Jim Tante** died at the age of 86 on December 6th. His memorial service will be held on January 4th at Hope Community Presbyterian Church.

Wayne and Bernie traveled to Moorhead, Minnesota, on December 4th to attend the annual Christmas Concert at Concordia College, where **Kate Barnes** is a member of the Cantabile women's chorus.

TREATS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

There is a sign-up sheet on the table downstairs for the next three months. Please consider choosing a week to be part of this outreach ministry.

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the February calendar need to be e-mailed or in the church office by Sunday, January 21st. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed or brought to the church office by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday. Emailed items need to have either "calendar" or "bulletin" in the subject line.