

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

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First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
741-7117

www.firstcovenantvirginia.org



Pastors Pen

THE EASTER STORY FOR YOU

In a few short weeks, we will be celebrating with the words that have been resounding over the centuries declaring Easter an exceptional holy day. "He is risen!" "He is risen, indeed!" Throughout the world on Easter Sunday, this proclamation is given in greeting one another as people gather to worship the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. What a proclamation! On the third day after our Lord was nailed to the cross and died a most excruciating death, and then laid into a tomb and covered with a boulder that would not be easily moved, Jesus defied death and was raised back to life by His heavenly Father. And over a period of some forty days, Jesus gave many convincing proofs that he was alive...indeed.

This story of Jesus is made real today not only by the pageants and worship experiences that happen in churches around the world, but by the unfolding of this story into our lives. The Bible informs us that there was a purpose in what happened two thousand years ago. Jesus died for the sins of the world; the sins that keep us separated from a relationship with God and even relation-

ships from one human being to another. It is in trusting what Jesus Christ did back then that allows us today to enter into a new way of relating to God and others. The sins that bound us are forgiven; the reality of true and abundant life becomes genuine; the hope of life eternal lies with great expectation on the horizon.

As you consider this story of Jesus, how does it relate with your story: the drama that is happening in your life right now? Jesus, who is life and light, desires to impact your story to make it whole and empower it to stand the challenges that come your way.



The Biblical story tells us of a God who is by our side and gives us strength. Jesus, himself, is quoted as saying, "I have said all these things to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble; but take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The prophet Isaiah has a word from the Lord (41:10): "Have no fear, for I am with you; do not be looking about in trouble, for I am your God; I will give you strength, yes, I will be your helper; yes, my true right hand will be your support."

A great verse from the Bible comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church: "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the proclamation of Easter. The very One who has victory over death, enables us to have victory in life.

**First Covenant Church
Purpose Statement**

The Mission of Fi[®]st Covenant Church is to
Worship God,
Equip people to Live in Faith,
Share God’s love.
and Serve the community around us

**HOLY WEEK AND EASTER
AT FIRST COVENANT**

Thursday, April 1st

6:30 P. M.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Sunday, April 10th

9:30 A.M.

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, April 17th

9:30 A.M.

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE

We are inviting members of our church family to add to the festivity of this special day by bringing Easter lilies and other flowering plants to decorate our sanctuary. You may wish to place them in memory or in honor of someone special in your life. If so, please let Pastor Dennis know ahead of time so that the names of those memorialized or honored may be included in the bulletin.

SERVING CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

Ushers:

- April 3 Roger & Judy Linden
- April 10 Shirley Koski
- April 17 Roger & Judy Linden
- April 24 Mike & Kathy Hannay
- May 1 Brian & Julie Hill

CHURCH CARETAKERS for the week of...

- April 3 Jeffrey & Heather Jones
- April 10 Mike & Kathy Hannay
- April 17 Roger & Judy Linden
- April 24 Lucas & Cassie Hill
- May 1 Pastor & Mary Anders

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

2/1/22-2/28/22

Checking account balance as Feb. 1st:
.....\$31,908.83
 General Fund income for current period:
.....\$7,687.00
 Other income:\$177.35
 Steam Conversion Donations:\$275.00
 Total expenses for current period:
.....\$8,375.65
 Checking account balance as of Feb. 28th:
.....\$31,695.18

QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING

The church business meeting for the first quarter of the year will be held a 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 24th. Members and friends of the church are encouraged to attend.

UPDATE FROM CRAIG WICKSTROM

I left for Congo on February 28th. I made a week-long trip to Wasolo in my first weeks and returned to Gemena to teach project proposal writing and management as well as advanced computer skills to key people. After the pastor’s conference (March 27 to April 1) I will accompany the director of Covenant World Relief and Development on a whirl-wind tour of CEUM projects. I hope to return to the U.S. April 8th.

Much of our time has been spent teaching in different contexts and settings. We are celebrating that it means that we are actually physically back in a classroom for some classes! Katie taught at 16 hour course on Christian Formation through the Ministerial Institute of Medellin, which is located at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia. The course was taught over two Saturdays, with each session running 8 hours. They were long, but productive, transformative days. The 16 students who completed the three certificate programs and are now completing 9 more courses to receive a diploma from the Ministerial Institute participated fully, sharing their own reflections, working in small

Continued from Page 2

groups, and presenting different spiritual disciplines they researched.

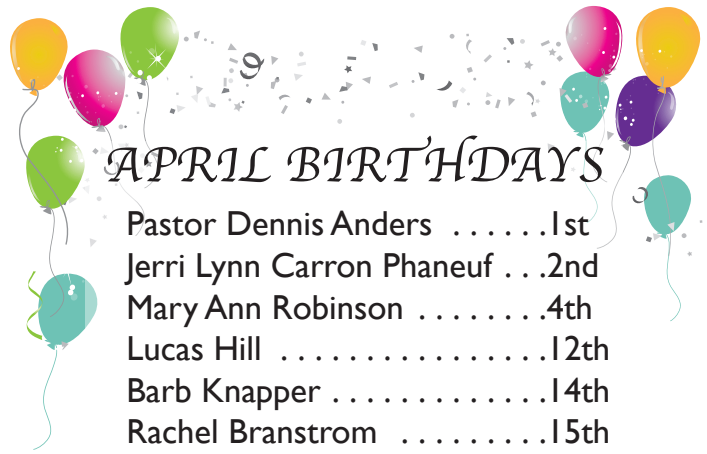
In addition to teaching an in-person course at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia, Julio continues to teach classes online for students around the country who are participating in the New Testament and Biblical Interpretations Certificate programs. Several pastors have expressed how important the Biblical Interpretations courses have been and how it has challenged them to approach preparing sermons differently. They have gained a new sense of responsibility and have said it's encouraged them to spend more time in preparation and study, in order to interpret the Biblical text as they teach others.

FROM STEVE & BARB SWANSON

In some ways, even everything in life that has been related to COVID and the pandemic of these past 2 years pales in comparison to life as it is happening right now. Yet we want to be faithful in being the witness that Malmö needs in the midst of the ongoing pandemic and the unique circumstances that it has created in our midst. We are thankful that we are able to gather live once again in church and enjoy fika (coffee and a simple sandwich after a Sunday morning service restores our physical needs even as our spiritual needs have been fed in worship).

Let it be said....nothing about this Covid pandemic has been easy in any way, shape or form. But I'm not telling you anything new! Recently I (Barb) had the privilege, and the challenge, of traveling from Malmö, Sweden to Athens, Greece, for the Refugee Highway Partnership (RHP) annual roundtable.

It was a great opportunity to bring along two refugee voices from our local church, to introduce them to this amazing network of Christ followers across Europe and beyond who work hard on welcoming the refugee in Europe....on being the hands and feet of Jesus to welcome those who have journeyed a long way to find welcome in the arms and homes of those who love Jesus and want to serve His kingdom here on earth.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- Pastor Dennis Anders1st
- Jerri Lynn Carron Phaneuf . . .2nd
- Mary Ann Robinson4th
- Lucas Hill12th
- Barb Knapper14th
- Rachel Branstrom15th
- Dorothy Schuknecht18th

AMONG US

Special congratulations to Dorothy Schuknecht on her birthday on the 18th of this month.

Roger & Judy's granddaughter, Emily Max, recently had the lead role of the mother in the opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors" at Bemidji State University. Roger & Judy attended the performance. Also attending were Emily's fiance Allen Hixon, Sara, Brandon & Max, Jon & Emily Linden, and Jay Carlsgaard. Emily is a junior majoring in vocal performance.

Address Correction

Jerri Lynn Phaneuf
303 N. Auburn Ave.
Eveleth, MN 55734



BULLETIN AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the May calendar need to be e-mailed to Linda Pogorelec (pogy56@q.com) by Sunday, April 17th. Weekly bulletin items must be e-mailed or brought to the church office by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday.

Items for the May issue of the Lamplighter should be turned in or e-mailed to wbchris@q.com by Sunday, April 17th.. Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the "Among Us" column.