



FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

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First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
741-7117
www.firstcovenantvirginia.org



PASTOR'S PEN

Settler vs Pioneer

Early on in my ministry with you all, I shared a story of the Settler and the Pioneer. It was an analogy of God and church life. Some of the analogy we resonated with while other parts we had difficulty listening to, let alone identifying with it. (It was the impetus for this clipart to the right that has been in our bulletins each week and in the monthly Pastor's Pen.) It reminded us of the call God has on our ministry to move forward into new territory. When asked which one are we, the consensus was a settled pioneer. What we were telling ourselves is that we have settled into who we are and what we perceive God's ministry through us to be. Yet, there is an openness to venture out into new ground of what God wants us to become and what ministry he desires to do through us.



There is a strength and comfort to be settled especially at the age of our church. Yet there has been movement in the past five years. One good example is moving from a board system to a council form of government. Bringing

together 3 boards into one governance brought better cohesion to work the ministry. That was a big move and took a course of 2-3 years to make it happen

Another move offered was a different approach to receiving God's Word through what is called the Lectio Divina. Yes, we need to be students of the Bible, yet we also need the Holy Spirit to transform us into the likeness of Christ, experiencing and expressing love for God and others. Lectio Divina helps us do just that.

Another major shift for us over the past several years is how do we do ministry amid a worldwide pandemic, whether that was the initial lockdown or not being able to celebrate Christmas or Easter together. Words like virtual services, hybrid, masks, unprecedenced all became everyday vocabulary. And we are so different now than from before it all began.

All these experiences have been changes that have led us into new territory. We have left our settlement, whether we wanted to or not. We are slowly venturing as true pioneers on God's route. God's blessing on you as you strive to be

settled pioneers for the sake of the kingdom of God.

And now another major shift is about to happen as our mutual ministry comes to a close. For you, it is to discern your next steps in calling a new pastor, and for me it is navigating the next chapter into retirement. In the midst of it all, it is my heart's desire that WE ALL live as true and faithful disciple of Jesus Christ so that we may experience and express His love for God's glory and neighbor's good. Amen and amen.

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.

PASTOR DENNIS'S RETIREMENT



Pastor Dennis Anders has announced his pending retirement as of May 31st of this year. His last Sunday with us will be May 22nd. He has served us for nearly five years. Over the past 37 years, he has served eight Covenant churches. He and Mary will be relocating to the Winona, Minnesota, area, where their son Aaron and his family live.

Our church will host a farewell / retirement reception for Pastor Dennis and Mary at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 22nd. Members of our church family are encouraged to attend, and members of the community and area clergy will be invited. There will be a short program followed by refreshments. You are

invited to bring expressions of appreciation to Pastor and Mary.

We are thankful for their years of service with us and wish them well as they retire.

SERVING CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

Ushers:

May 1—Brian & Julie Hill
May 8—Roger & Gail Johnston
May 15—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen
May 22—Shirley Koski
Jun. 5—Mike & Kathy Hannay

Church caretakers for the week of . . .

May 1—Pastor Dennis & Mary Anders
May 8—Roger & Gail Johnston
May 15—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen & Audrey Branstrom
May 22—Ken & Linda Pogorelec
May 29—Shirley Koski & Barb Knapper
Jun. 5—Russ & Stephanie Carlson

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

3/1/22-3/31/22



Checking account balance as Mar. 1st: **\$31,695.18**

General Fund income for current period: **\$6,712.00**

Other income: **\$193.88**

Steam Conversion Donations: **\$275.00**

Total expenses for current period: **\$13,709.48**

Checking account balance as of Mar. 31st:

\$25,065.70

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Magan Carlson and her dad, Russell, have completed a year of confirmation studies with Pastor Dennis and will be confirmed during the worship service on May 15th. A reception will follow the service. We congratulate them on this milestone in their faith journey.

FOOD SHELF DRIVE

During the month of March we donated 45 pounds of food items and \$75 in cash to the Quad City Food Shelf. Thanks to all who contributed and to Roger Linden for taking the donations to the Food Shelf.



LITTLE FOOD PANTRY



Just a reminder that we as a church have “adopted” the Little Food Pantry located in front of the AEO building a block south of our church. You may leave non-perishable items or monetary donations the designated box at the top the stairs in our front

entry. Checks should be made out to the church, and we will purchase items for the pantry.

Items suggested are as follows: deodorant, soap, diapers/wipes, baby formula, baby food pouches, bread, summer sausage, tuna in packets or cans, boxed pasta, cereal, oatmeal, granola bars, snack crackers, dried fruit, toilet paper, restaurant gift cards, toothbrushes, tissue packets, pepperoni packets, beef jerky, peanut butter, apple sauce, tortillas, string cheese, and canned fruits and vegetables. This is a good opportunity to reach out to community members in need.

LADIES LUNCH



All ladies are invited to join us for lunch at noon on Tuesday, May 3rd, at Adventures Restaurant. If you have questions or need ride, please contact Bernie or Shirley.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The National Day of Prayer gathering will take place in front of the courthouse in Virginia at noon on Thursday, May 5th. You are invited to join with other believers in praying for our community, our nation, and our world.



THE MUSIC OF SPRINGTIME

The Choralaires, under the direction of Myron Cook, will present their annual spring concert at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday May 7th, at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Virginia. There is no admission charge, but a donations will be accepted.



The Rock Ridge school orchestras, under the direction of Sheila Wilcox, will present their spring concert 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 9th, in Goodman Auditorium.

The Virginia High School choirs, under the direction of Matt Krage, will present their spring concert at 7:00 p. m. on Monday, May 23rd, in Goodman Auditorium.

JACKIE'S ATTIC



gg130587458 www.gograph.com

“Jackie's Attic” is a “set your own price” community thrift store owned and operated by the local Christian community. We want to make sure that everyone in the Virginia area is able to access the clothing, furnishings, kitchenware and household items that they

need, and know that the people who love Jesus love them. We are located at 210 5th Avenue South in Virginia -across the street from the library. While we happily accept donations what we really want from area churches is: 1. **Prayer.** Every day that we have been open we have had the opportunity to share the gospel and pray with those in need. Continue to pray that the LORD will use this work to bring Himself glory! 2. **Referrals.** If you know of anyone with any need, send them our way! We get regular referrals from AEOA, social workers, mental health workers and hospital employees but we would love to be a resource to the church as well! 3. **Shoppers.** We have had many people from the churches donate products, but we have not had many come by to shop. In order for someone in need to pay nothing it helps to have someone who can afford it pay anything.

We are open most weekdays from 10am to 5pm, with occasional weekend hours. You can find our exact weekly schedule on our Facebook page or store-front window. If you have any questions or need after-hours assistance, text Daniel at 218-780-2359.

CHURCH PICNIC

Our annual church picnic has been scheduled for Sunday, July 31st, at the Kline-Cuppoletti Building on the west shore of Silver Lake. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.



MESABI RANGE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Please Pray

Pray for the seniors who will be leaving our program this year.

Pray for softened hearts as we share the gospel each month with students who often have never heard it.

Pray that God will send us more volunteers.

Pray that God will help us meet our needs financial



This year Covenant Kids Congo celebrates ten years of partnership with the Evangelical Covenant Church, World Vision, and the Covenant Church of Congo. It is now an initiative of Covenant World Relief and Development, specifically focusing on community development work in Gemena and Karawa, DR Congo.

Recently Gary Walter, former president of the Covenant and a key voice in the launch of CKC, said, “Hope shows up when people of hope show up.” Hundreds of Covenant churches and thousands of child sponsors continue to show up and bring hope to our sisters and brothers in DR Congo. There has been amazing progress in the region in the past ten years of partnership, and it is encouraging to continue moving forward.



The current crisis in Ukraine has caused the largest displacement of people in Europe since WWII. More than 3 million refugees have fled from Ukraine into surrounding nations, and those numbers are growing. These displaced people are in dire need of food, housing, hygiene supplies, trauma counseling, medical care, and transportation. Covenant World Relief and Development is providing immediate assistance to refugees from Ukraine through our established partners on the ground in Poland, Slovakia, and other European countries who are taking in the refugees.

You can participate in this urgent ministry of welcoming neighbors in need by donating to Covenant World Relief and Development. Please join us in praying for an end to the destruction and bloodshed. The needs of Ukraine will go on long after the war has ended, and our partners will provide aid as conditions evolve. Please consider giving towards this important effort at giving.covchurch.org/priorities-detail/ukraine-response.

OAXACAN ODYSSEY

It had been four years since we'd spent a month in Oaxaca. We went two years ago with that intention, but COVID hit, and the U.S. government advised Americans to return home.

This March and April we were able to spend almost five weeks in Oaxaca. We had a comfortable apartment at the hotel where we've stayed in the past. It included a small kitchen where Bernie could prepare meals, but we also took advantage of restaurants in the city so we could sample the delicious Oaxacan food.

Every morning the hotel provided coffee an' in the patio area. This gave us a chance to visit with other guests, an interesting group of people from various parts of the U.S..

Our hotel was located just a block from a very nice park, where we would often walk in the evening and

watch families with young children also enjoying the park.

For the first three weeks, I took the city bus out to the Oaxaca Christian School, a school for children of American missionaries. I spent most of my time there working in the library processing books from classroom libraries so they could be incorporated into the library data base. I also proctored standardized tests and worked with the 5th and 6th-graders on their writing. I was able to get in on a Mexican meal each noon.

While I was at school, Bernie spend time working on her Spanish on Duolingo and Rosetta Stone, doing handwork, preparing meals, and running errands.

The last week we were there the school was on spring break, so we had a more leisurely schedule with time to explore the city, including checking out the markets and various stores and people-watching in the zócalo, the main plaza in the center of the city.

On three of the Sundays we worshiped at the Anglican-Episcopal Church, which does not have a resident priest but rather one who comes for a period of time. The priest this time was from Connecticut but grew up in Minneapolis in a neighborhood with a number of Covenant families. Besides him there was a young seminary intern. Both were wonderful men—one nearing the end of his ministry and one just beginning his. We much appreciated both of them. Since returning home we have heard from Ignacio, the intern. Besides worshiping there on Sundays, we attended the Friday prayer services and their Maundy Thursday service. One of the women in the church has a sister who attends the Cook Baptist Church, and the family of another has a cabin on Lake Vermilion. It's a small world!

The weather during our time in Oaxaca was warm, with temperatures in the 90's. It was difficult to come back to winter in Minnesota. We are looking forward to spend the month of March there next year.

—Wayne & Bernie

VISIT TO AMPARO Y FORTALEZA COVENANT CHURCH

On one of our Sundays in Oaxaca we took a cab out to the Covenant church, where we had two mission teams from our church. During one of those times we helped put in the foundation for the church building and the other time we painted two of the small rooms and varnished cabinets for the rooms. On both occasions we were involved in Bible school for the children and conducted English classes.



It was good to once again see Pastor Julio, his wife, Monica, their two boys, and people from the church. The pastor's boys participated in the

worship service by playing guitar and drums. We were sad to learn that Pastor Julio's father, Armando, had died of COVID two months earlier. He had donated the land for the church and was undoubtedly a major financial contributor to the work of the church.

During the worship service, Wayne spoke briefly giving a greeting on behalf of our church. Following the service we shared refreshments of soft drinks and cookies. The pastor and people sent greetings with us back to our church here.

The church building is very attractive. The corrugated tin sheets on the street side of the church have been replaced by beautiful white wrought iron.

We are thankful for the opportunity we had to connect with the brothers and sisters at Amparo y Fortaleza Covenant Church.

MAY BIRTHDAYS



Roger Lnden	1st
Sue Arvola	4th
Darrell Knaoper	7th
Ken Pogorelec	8th
Muriel Stanaway	14th
Cassie Hill	14th
Christian Hill	15th
Sid Reindahl	17th
Martha Kortes	24th
Carolyn Erickson	25th
Gunnar Carlson	31st

AMONG US



Friends and family gathered on April 18th to celebrate **Dorothy Schuknecht's** 93rd birthday.

Congratulations to **Muriel Stanaway** on her special birthday on the 14th of this month.

Audrey Branstrom spent some time visiting family in Illinois and Michigan.

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES



Items for the June calendar need to be e-mailed to pogy56@q.com by Sunday, May 22nd. Weekly bulletin items must be e-mailed or brought to the church office by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday prior to the Sunday they are to be included.

Items for the June issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, May 22nd. Items may be submitted by e-mail to wbchris@q.com. Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the "Among Us" column