



FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER



*First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
741-7117*

www.firstcovenantvirginia.org

**Volume XLVI - Number 6
June 2022**

When Possessions Become Prisons

Jay E. Adams writes that under the roof in his back yard hangs a hummingbird feeder that he keeps filled with sugar water. There are four openings in it from which birds may suck the nectar. Yet, day after day, from early morning until after dusk, the feeder is the source of their own private version of star wars. One bird chases all the others away.

“As I said,” Adams writes, “there is room for four birds at a time, and fully that number attempt to feed. But the top dog (excuse my use of this metaphor for a hummingbird!), who now ‘owns’ the feeder, will not let them. All day long he sits on the branch of a nearby apricot tree guarding ‘his’ feeder and defying others to transgress on what he has established as ‘his’ territory.

“This ongoing slice of life confronts us throughout the day as green and red hummers streak across the yard, the king hummer in hot pursuit of an intruder. While the chase is on, others sneak a sip or two, only to be driven off when he returns.

“The whole business has become a sort of parable for our family. Here is an example of grace: I bought the feeder; I supply the sugar water. The birds do not earn it; they receive it all FREE. Yet, day after day, they fight over who may enjoy it.

“How like the people of God! All we have or are that is worthwhile is the gift of God's pure grace. And yet we can be proud, self-centered, envious, and quarrelsome. Often, we fight over God's good gifts rather than expressing our gratitude in humility and sharing what we have been given with others. Just as I am confronted daily with rivalry in my yard, even so God is confronted daily with rivalry in His.”

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:

- Jun. 5—Mike & Kathy Hannay
- Jun. 12—Brian & Julie Hill
- Jun. 19—Jeffrey & Heather Jones
- Jun. 26—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen
- Jul. 3—Shirley Koski

Church Caretakers for the week of . . .

- Jun. 6—Russ & Stephanie Carlson
- Jun. 13—Brian & Julie Hill
- Jun. 20—Jeffrey & Heather Jones
- Jun. 27—Mike & Kathy Hannay
- Jul. 4—Roger & Judy Linden

Lawn-Mowing for the week of . . .

- Jun. 6—Wayne Christiansen
- Jun. 13—Brian Hill
- Jun. 20—Roger Linden
- Jun. 27—Mike Hannay
- Jul. 4—Lucas Hill

PULPIT SUPPLY

- June 12—Daniel Triestman
- June 19—Mike Hannay
- June 26—Scott Nellis
Retired Covenant pastor
- July 3—Daniel Triestman

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

4/1/22-4/30/22

- Checking account balance as Apr. 1st: **\$ 25,065.70**
- General Fund income for current period: **\$ 8,549.00**
- Other income: **\$87.47**
- Steam conversion donation: **\$275.00**
- Total expenses for current period: **\$8,375.29**
- Checking account balance as of April 30th:
\$26,634.41

COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES



We are meeting again for Ladies Lunch the first Tuesday of the month. On June 7, we will meet at noon at the Little Gourmet Deli in the Tini Building. We hope you will join us.

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

Our annual Church picnic will be held on Sunday, July 31st, at the Kline-Cuppoletti Building on the west shore of Silver Lake. Our worship will be held at 11:00 followed by a potluck dinner and fellowship. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.



UPDATES

FROM OUR COVENANT MISSIONARIES

Our last update was sent just as Barb and the Teen Challenge interns took a group of 14 women out to a retreat place on the beach just 30 minutes from Malmö. It was an amazing weekend of affirmation, worship, good food, a dip in the sea (with 2 degrees Celsius in the air (that's 35 degrees Fahrenheit), and 4.2 degrees in the water (so think 39 degrees Fahrenheit). You can read all about it on our blog, www.swedishmosaics.blogspot.com.

Thanks to all who prayed for us, and who gave and continue to give sacrificially for this project. We saw new friendships develop as the Scandinavians (because there was a Danish friend as well) took walks and prayed with those of us coming from a different land (Iran, Syrian, Moldova and the USA). At the same time, Steve was hanging out with some of the young men cooking burgers on the grill and going deeper in conversations about Jesus.

—Steve & Barb Swanson (Sweden)

I try to avoid setting expectations for my trips to Congo, but I always go with hope and expectancy. Expectancy leaves me ready to accept all that God provides. One of my hopes for my recent trip was to visit Wasolo, a two day journey from Gemena. At the end of February, tensions and a violent altercation threatened my trip, but by the time I was ready to travel, God had opened the way.

With Wasolo as our base, we met with local government authorities, visited churches in Yakoma, Abuzi (Abumombazi), Wapinda, and Legbala, and met with pastors, health workers, and educators at Wasolo, itself. Sometimes I met with individuals, but usually we met in groups where I introduced myself and then asked people to tell me their names, their work, what gives them joy, and what they find challenging. What gladdened them was being part of God's Kingdom; what challenged them was also a lack of Bibles and songbooks, or of medicines, but the number one concern of everyone (including the government) was the division within the CEUM. The break-away groups had hard words and some claimed that reconciliation was impossible, but all longed to some day be one again in the Lord.

The remainder of my six weeks in Congo found me participating in a pastoral couple's conference, accompanying a Christian team looking at agricultural investment in North and South Ubangi provinces, and walking alongside the CEUM executive committee as it does strategic planning and explores new ways to faithfully manage a community of over 200,000 members serving over 2 million people.

Thank you for caring about Congo and about my ministry.
—Craig Wicksstrom



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Jeffrey Jones	1st
Lester Hallfors	2nd
Bernie Christiansen	8th
Mike Hannay	20th
Brian Hill	29th

AMONG US



On Sunday afternoon, May 22nd, **Pastor Dennis Anders and Mary** were honored with a farewell/retirement reception for their five years with us. Members of the church family attended along with area pastors and a group from the Superior Covenant Church.

Shirley Koski attended the high school graduation of her granddaughter Krista in Utah. Krista will begin studies at the University of St. Thomas in St.-Paul.

Wayne Christiansen was chosen by the Virginia class of 2022 to present the graduation speech on June 3rd.

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the July calendar need to be e-mailed to Linda Pogorelec (pogy56@q.com) by Sunday, June 19th. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to wbchris@q.com by Wednesday.

Items for the July issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, June 26th. 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.