



FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

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First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota
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A New Year, A New You:

Going Deeper in God

If you're like most people, you've probably made a few resolutions for the coming year. Perhaps, you'll lose weight, exercise more, watch less television, or spend more time with God. The problem with resolutions is that they're only skin deep. You make a proclamation and then you use your willpower to try to fulfill it or make it happen. The Bible says that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Although our intentions are good, we lack the wherewithal or persistence to stick with our new year's resolutions for the long haul and within days, weeks, or even months we're right back where we started.

The scriptures demonstrate that the responsibility to change or to fulfill our desires (or resolutions) isn't based entirely upon our will but God's Spirit living in us.

God knows that we are weak, but in our weakness, He is strong. It is in our own frailty and weakness that we surrender and turn the reins over to God. When we acknowledge our weaknesses and inability to change ourselves and turn our attention to God as the architect and molder of our lives as well as our hearts, we become the clay in God's loving and wise hands. Therefore, our resolutions must change from seeking after a desired outcome to seeking after God.

We must begin to use our weaknesses to go deeper into God. All too often when we become restless or begin to fixate on what is missing in our lives, we go on a desperate search to meet our needs, but this is like fishing in the dark. That hunger that every Christians feels one time or another comes from God; however, God doesn't want us to fill this hunger with more people, situation, or things. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). Gifts are usually unexpected, they are selected based upon the likes and tastes of the recipient, and they are a blessing to the receiver. God wants to give all of his children every perfect gift that leads to health, wellness, contentment, wholeness, peace, joy, and purpose. But it comes through seeking after God with all your heart, soul, and strength and getting your own false ideas or assumptions out of the way.

Wait on the Lord. This means waiting on God through all the mental and emotional pain that you'll endure during this detaching process. Going deeper in God means listening to Him as he leads and guides you to wholeness and contentment, and most importantly, it means listening to the still small voice in your heart and crowding out or eliminating all the other voices that cause confusion, doubt, and fear.

The result of going deeper in God will result in a new you, a healthier you, a more joyful and content you. If you only have one new year's resolution, let it be to surrender yourself more fully to the living and transformative power of God and to let him do the work he wants to do in you and through you.

—The Christian Meditator

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. 1—Roger & Judy Linden
Jan. 8—Brian & Julie Hill
Jan. 15—Roger & Gail Johnston
Jan. 22—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen
Jan. 29—Bob & Mary Nelson
Feb. 5—Shirley Koski

Church Caretakers for the Week of . . .

Jan. 1—Shirley Koski & Barb Knapper
Jan. 8—Russ & Steph Carlson
Jan. 15—Brian & Julie Hill
Jan. 22—Jeffrey & Heather Jones
Jan. 29—Mike & Kathy Hannay
Feb. 5—Roger & Judy Linden

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

11/1/22-11/30/22

Checking account balance as Nov. 1st:
\$36,503.96

General Fund income for current period:
\$6,682.10

Other income: **\$81,269.10**

Total expenses for current period: **\$4,334.906**

Checking account balance as of Nov. 30th:

\$38,862.16



The camp annual meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 7th, at Gethsemane Covenant Church in Duluth. The meeting will begin with breakfast. This is a good opportunity to learn how God was at work at work at camp last year and what the plans are for this coming summer.

CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

Our church will hold its Annual Meeting at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 29th. Members and friends



of the church are encouraged to attend as we review our ministry during the past year and look

ahead to what we can do to fulfill our mission in the new year. Reports to be included in annual booklet should be submitted to Gail Johnston (gailjohnston@gmail.com) **no later than Sunday, January 22nd.**

SERVICE AT WATERVIEW PINES



Our church will have the service at Waterview Pines health care facility at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 29th. It would be good to have a number of church family along to help with the singing and to bring a friendly word to the residents





50,094 people now have access to hand washing facilities with soap and water to practice good hygiene and reduce the spread of disease.

4160 people have gained access to clean drinking water.

12,004 smallholder farmers have participated in savings groups, saving a total of \$149,649 and helping to ensure financial security for their families.

PAUL CARLSON PARTNERSHIP

In July 2021, a lightning strike and ensuing fire completely destroyed the Karawa Hospital Pharmacy, which included a regional stock of medicines, medical library, and the medical laundry facility. Paul Carlson Partnership launched a campaign to raise funds to rebuild the pharmacy. To date, gifts total \$108,900.

Construction of the foundation has already begun. Congolese leaders and engineers have provided a full construction plan divided into phases. The first phase includes a robust foundation and ground floor. It will be constructed so that as future funds are available/, a second and possibly a third floor can be added.

THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you to my dear church family for helping celebrate my 90th birthday. I have enjoyed and appreciated each card and special message. Also thank you to Bernie for arranging for the birthday cake and surprising me during coffee time. I think I celebrated for an entire week! I am thankful for each of you and for the years God has given me.

—Audrey Branstrom

Dear Mission Friends in Virginia,
Warm greetings to you in Jesus' name. We thank God for you and for your partnership in the gospel. We enjoyed our visit this past autumn. May the Lord continue to do great things in and through you.
With our love and prayers,
Steve and Barbara Swanbson.

We are writing in gratitude for your donation of \$100 to the 2022 Habitat 500 in honor of the accomplishments of Debby Bocnuck and in support of Habitat's mission! We enjoyed having Debby participate in this year's ride. Thank you very much for contributing to this great event; your gift helps create opportunities for families to build strength and independence through home ownership.

—Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Gail Johnston 6th
Ed Pajunen 31st



BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the February calendar need to be e-mailed to pogy56@q.com by Sunday, January 15th. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to wbchris@q.com by Wednesday of

the week.

AMONG US

Grady Knapper, Barb and Darryl's grandson, played on the Mt. Iron-Buhl football team that won the state 9-man championship for the first time in 50 years.

Ken & Linda Pogorelec are enjoying spending winter in Arizona.

Mike & Kathy Hannay have left to spend a few weeks in the warmth of Alabama.

Items for the February issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, January 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.



by Sunday, January 16th. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed or brought to the church office by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday.

Items for the February issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, January 23rd. Items may be submitted by e-mail to [**wbchris@q.com**](mailto:wbchris@q.com). Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the “Among Us” column.

