

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

**Volume XL - Number 4
April 2023**

MARY MAGDALENE:

“I HAVE SEEN THE LORD!”

Originally in 2016 Newsletter

You don't seem happy. You are thinking, Mary Magdalene, of course you've seen the Lord. You walked with him daily after he healed you.

That's not what I mean. I saw him risen – alive! You might not know how I felt: I was there, at the foot of the cross, when Jesus gave Mary and John to each other. Who did I have? No one!

I was there when he said, “I'm thirsty,” and they gave him a swab of vinegar. What could I do? Nothing!

I was there when he said, “It is finished.” Who would have thought it would come to that? A dead man on a cross God forsaken! Was this the glory he had intended? Was this God's way of acting? God forsaken – alone.

As a daughter of Jerusalem, the one thing I had learned was to mourn. I loved him. I had followed him. I would stay with him! – when the Sabbath was over, of course. I thought the worst had happened, until I got to the tomb that morning. The stone had been moved – they couldn't even leave a body in peace! Surely the Master had deserved a proper burial.

Later – I wondered why I hadn't walked right in! Instead I ran to tell the others – what had they done to our teacher and friend's body. Peter and the beloved ones left – running, but I couldn't stay still long enough for them to return. I set

out again. Why? You ask. To cry, of course, near to his last resting place – or to find out where he was taken!

Now I had the courage to look in and two messengers guided us. Would you ask a visitor at a grave site why she is crying? I was so lonely without Jesus. He meant everything to me!

Then the gardener came and asked the same thing, adding “Whom are you looking for?” “Just a body – to give it a proper burial now that it's been desecrated.” I said.

Then a wonderful thing happened. “Mary!” The gardener knew my name. No one knew me that well and loved me so much as Jesus! “Mary, He had told us once that he calls the sheep by his own name and they know his voice. Teacher and Master! “

I wanted to cling to him forever – not ever to enter such despair again. But I couldn't. His words were beautiful – “Go to my sisters and brothers and tell them that I am on the way. To my Father and your Father—To my God and your God.”

Equality, love, unity. He was one with us! □ Not only was I freed from that deep despair, but then I knew this was not only a teacher of Israel, the Lord –God has acted in this Jesus.

I have seen the Lord!

—Mary Mae Swartzentruber

FIRST COVENANT PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose 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:

Apr. 2—Brian & Julie Hill
Apr. 9—Roger & Gail Johnston
Apr. 16—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen
Apr. 23—Bob & Mary Nelson
Apr. 30—Shirley Koski

Caretakers for the week of . .

Apr. 2—Mike & Kathy Hannay
Apr. 9—Roger & Judy Linden
Apr. 16—Lucas & Cassie Hill
Apr. 23—Roger & Gail Johnston
Apr. 30—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen

April Birthday

2nd JerriLynn Phaneuf
9th MaryAnn Robinson
12th Lucas Hill
14th Barb Knapper
15th Rachael Branstrom

Thank You

Due for your donation, we, the last graduation class of VHS '23, will be able to enjoy our Safe & Sober All Night Grad Party. At the time, creating memories that will last us a lifetime.

We appreciate your contribution to our class.
Sincerely,

VHS Class of 2023 &
Virginia Safe & Sober
Student Activity Club

Services at Waterview Pines

At 2PM, on Sunday, April 30, our church will hold a half-hour service at Waterview Pines health care facility. Members of our church are encouraged to be there to help the residents find the hymn in their songbook and to extend a friendly word for them.

Out and About

Audrey is spending time with family in Chicago and area.

Wayne and Bernie have been in Oaxaca Mexico for the past month.

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the May calendar need to be e-mailed to pogy56@q.com by Sunday, April 16th.

Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to gailjohnston@gmail.com by Wednesday

Items for the March issue of the Lamplighter should be turned in by Sunday, April 16th. 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.

UPGRADE FROM STEVE & BARB SWANSON

Our first Sunday back in Sweden included worship at the largest Swedish Lutheran church in Malmö, when all the free churches in town and some of the Lutheran churches as well gathered for worship. With over 1,000 in attendance, it was an amazing welcome back to worship and community. There was a group of 15 people who came Our first Sunday back included worship at the largest Swedish Lutheran church in Malmö, when all the free churches in town and some of the Lutheran churches as well gathered for worship. With over 1,000 in attendance, it was an amazing welcome back to worship and community. There was a group of 15 people who came forward and shared their testimonies in words written on signs that they proudly held up before those who gathered.

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Their words described what God had done in this last season of Alpha courses which had been held all over the city of Malmö.

Those encouraging words from the transformation that happened during the Alpha season also bore witness to the changes that are going on at Wesleykrykan just now. Taco-kväll, a monthly gathering for tacos and family fun on Friday nights, continues to be a huge success in our midst. Yes, Swedes eat tacos on Friday nights. They also like to hang out together. So, let's bring out the portable ping-pong table for some Friday night fun!

Our goals: more members ~ a larger network ~ develop places for faith and growth (through our worship services, small groups, and out-reach activities), increase our giving, and develop more leaders....that's a team we can work with!

We can hardly contain our excitement as we were finally able to welcome our dear friends, and new Serve Globally colleagues, Bonnie and Eric Sparrman to our southern region of Skåne!!! After a long process of waiting for their work permits, those permits were granted in early February. They packed up quickly and arrived in Sweden on February 25th. It feels really good to have more SG personnel nearby. They'll be working in 2 local congregations in a revitalization project in Lomma, and an English church planting project in Lund. We're so thankful for God's call on their lives to join Equmeniakyrkan and Serve Globally in

