

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

First Covenant Church

Virginia, Minnesota

741-7117

www.firstcovenantvirginia.org

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“Stuff”

Do you want to discover a truly liberating view of the “stuff” we have in our lives? It’s pretty simple—be responsible for deciding what to do with a parent’s stuff when they are no longer able to deal with it.

When my mother made her final move to an assisted living facility, she did not have the ability to take on sorting through a household of possessions—nor the mental, physical, or emotional strength. And when it was apparent that she would never return to independent living, I rented a dumpster, parked it in her driveway, and spent four days tossing the residue of a life into it. We wanted to sell the house—she needed the income to help fund her care—so the place had to be empty.

I started the winnowing process, and most of my siblings came a day later. We saved a few sentimental pieces, a couple of chests my grandfather had made, a few knickknacks that were either nostalgic or valuable. Some of what she owned went to the local church thrift store—dishes, silverware, utensils—things that looked serviceable.

One group of items that we quickly tossed was upholstered furniture. We figured that the living room set was nearly six decades old. It wasn't of high quality to begin with and had been sad and sagging for a long, long time. There were boxes and boxes of books—your standard inexpensive paperbacks, now decades old. Not even the used bookstore in town wanted them

And then the dumpster was full. That was the sum total of the stuff that two people, my father and mother, had spent a lifetime accumulating. It was a sad moment, but one of great instructional value, at least to me.

In the end, that's what will happen to all of our stuff. Sure, a few pieces will get passed along to the next generation. Maybe. (If I collected enough gold ingots, I bet those would be saved.) But for the most part, rust and decay and rot will overtake every one of our most prized earthly possessions.

I don't mean to be depressing. However, this purging pointed out to me the futility of holding on to things too tightly. You can't take it with you. It will stay behind and become your offsprings' headache.

As the Bible says, store up treasures in heaven. Do God's work. Witness, Live a cheerful life. Smile. Make pleasant memories. Live as Jesus would have you live. Be generous in all things. Show God's grace in all that you do.

And don't worry about your stuff.

—Jim Kraus



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:

Aug.. 6—Shirley Koski
Aug. 13—Roger & Judy Linden
Aug. 20—Mike & Kathy Hannay
Aug 27—Brian & Julie Hill
Sept. 3—Roger & **Gail** Johnston
Sept. 10—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen

Church caretakers for the week of . . .

Aug. 6—Jeffrey & Heather Jones
Aug. 13—Mike & Kathy Hannay
Aug. 20—Roger & Judy Linden
Aug. 27—Lucas & Cassie Hill
Sept. 3—Roger & Gail Johnston
Sept. 10—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen

FINANCIAL REPORT 6/1/23-6/30/23

Balance on hand on 6/1	\$41,577.13
General Fund income	\$7,213.00
Other income	\$58.00
Expenses	\$15,201.98
Balance on hand on 6/30	\$43,242.35

COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES

We have scheduled Ladies Lunch at noon on Tuesday, August 1st at Little Gourmet Deli. We hope you will join us.

GRADUATION PARTY

You are invited to a party honoring JD Johnston on his graduation from high school. The party will be held from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 20, at the Johnston home, 609 27th Street, Cloquet.



MESABI RANGE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

A message from a Campus Life parent;

My family is forever very grateful to have found Campus Life. We live in a very small-town with little or nothing to do. My kids anxiously await Campus Life days for the fun, fellowship, snacks, games, events, etc..They have attended for a few years now and have created new lifelong friendships and positive connections. Campus Life provides a Christ-centered healthy role model and a safe environment for my kids to enjoy. Especially during the trying times during the pandemic it was comforting and heartwarming to know that Campus Life gave youth something good to turn to and encouraged a new, deeper relationship with Christ.

NORTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The need for affordable housing is critical in our area. Many of our lower-income neighbors experience the cost burden of paying much more than 30% of their income for apartments that are often inadequate, unsafe, and dilapidated. As an ecumenical Christian housing ministry, we work to fulfill our mission of displaying God's love by bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope. Each year we match families in need of homes with available lots, funding sources, and volunteer availability. Over the years we have been blessed to have built with 116 households in 15 communities!

COVENANT KIDS CONGO

Malnutrition is a major issue throughout DR Congo. When the Karawa Area Program began in 2021, malnourishment was identified as one of the top challenges facing the community. For as long as anyone can remember, children in Karawa have been dying of malnutrition. We have seen much progress in the area of malnutrition in Gemena and are prayerful as we begin to hear stories of transformation in Karawa.

La Grace was only three months old when her mother died. It became difficult for her father, Ndepana, to support her older brother and a new baby, while also working. La Grace soon became malnourished, and her father was worried. He recalls, "She was losing weight from day to day and all her hair had fallen out."

Last year, a World Vision community volunteer looked in on the vulnerable family, and it became clear that La Grace, now a toddler, was struggling. The volunteer connected them with the Karawa Area Program office. World Vision gave Ndepana four packs of soap, sugar, and salt—enough to provide for his family and a little extra, which he sold to start a small peanut-growing business. La Grace was also enrolled in Positive Deviance Hearth (PD Hearth), a feeding and education pro-

gram that teaches parents how to fight malnutrition using nutritious local foods.

Today, La Grace is a healthy two-year-old. "I thank World Vision for providing items to start income-generating activities and coaching to parents on improving the health of the malnourished children in our community," says her happy father.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



This is the best time to purchase school supplies for our boxes. We have crayons and pencils but need scissors, pens, chalk, glue sticks, note pads, calculators, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, pencil boxes, etc..

THANK YOU NOTE

Thank you, First Covenant Church, for your donation of \$100.00 for fire safety materials prepared by the National Fire Safety Council, which takes pride in working with dedicated fire departments such as yours, who are committed to teaching children and members of the community vital fire safety and burn prevention. Your generosity will allow your local firefighters to distribute these materials to a larger number of children and individuals in your area.

AMONG US

We would like to thank our church family for all the love and prayers we have experienced since the sudden and unexpected death of our son Stephen. It is and will continue to be a very difficult journey, but we are confident that God will continue to guide and comfort us. We appreciate Mike's willingness to officiate at the service, and the efforts of the ladies in baking all manner of bars for the luncheon. They went above and beyond. Thank you to Roger and Gail for the printing and technical assistance. We have been blessed by the sharing of stories about how Stephen impacted other's lives and how he put a smile on their faces. Our hope is that as we journey through our grief, God will be glorified as we rely on him for our strength. Thank you, again.

Brian, Julie, Aaron, Matthew, Lucas, and their Families

Congratulations to **JD Johnston** on completing his high school education.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Jean Pajunen	9th
Judy Linden	19th
Linda Pogorelec	30th

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the September calendar need to be emailed to pogy56@gmail.com by Sunday, August 20th. Weekly bulletin items should be emailed to wbchris@q.com by the Wednesday before they are to appear.

Items for the September issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by August 20th. They may be submitted by email to wbchris@q.com. Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the "Among Us" column.

