

# FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

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February 2024



First Covenant Church  
Virginia, Minnesota

[www.firstcovenantvirginia.org](http://www.firstcovenantvirginia.org)

## “Kind and Merciful God”

Kind and merciful God,  
we have sinned in your sight,  
and we have all wandered far from your way;  
we have followed desire, we have failed to as-  
pire to the virtue we ought to display.

Kind and merciful God,  
we’ve neglected your Word  
and the truth that would guide us aright;  
we have lived in the shade of the dark we have  
made when you willed us to walk in the light.

Kind and merciful; God,  
we have broken your laws  
and in conduct have veered from the norm;  
we have dreamed of the good,  
but the good that we could  
we have frequently failed to perform.

Kind and merciful God,  
in Christ’s death on the cross  
you provided a cleansing from sin;  
speak the words that forgive  
that hence forth we may live  
by the might of your Spirit within.

Kind and merciful God,  
bid us lift up our heads  
and command us to rise from our knees;  
may our hearts now be changed  
and no longer estranged  
through the power of your pardon and grace.

—Bryan Jeffrey Leech  
*The Covenant Hymnal: A Worshipbook*



## 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:

Feb. 4—Shirley Koski  
Feb. 11—Roger & Judy Linden  
Feb. 18—Brian & Julie Hill  
Feb. 25—Roger & Gail Johnston  
Mar.. 3—Bob & Mary Nelson

### Church caretakers for week of . . .

Feb. 4—Russ & Stephanie Carlson  
Feb. 11—Brian & Julie Hil  
Feb. 18—Jeffrey & Heather Jones  
Feb. 25—Mike & Kathy Hannay  
Mar. 3—Roger & Judy Linden

## MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT 12/1/23-12/31/23



Checking account balance as of Dec.. 1st: **\$65,170.55**

General Fund income for current period: **\$8,670.00**

Other income: **\$638.00**

Total expenses for current period: **\$4,067.49**

Checking account balance as of Nov. 30th: **\$61,211.06**

## COVENANT PARK BIBLE CAMP

The Covenant Park Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 3rd, at Gethsemane Covenant Church in Hermantown. Breakfast will be served beginning at 9:00, followed by the business meeting. Camp board members will be elected, and the proposed constitution will be voted on. This past sum-

mer at camp will be reviewed, and plans for the coming summer will be presented. Members of our church are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to [office@covenantpark.org](mailto:office@covenantpark.org).

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Besides Nigeria and Paraguay, some of our boxes went to Peru.

We encourage you to continue to pray for those receiving the shoeboxes. Each child is encouraged to attend a discipleship class. Those that finish the class are given a Bible in their own language. Many of the children have chosen to follow Christ and many families have come to know Christ as a result.



Have you found any bargains? The box for Operation Christmas Child is now out, and we hope by shopping all year to be able to fill more boxes. Some items suggested are: marbles, sunglasses (Dollar Store has), solar calculators, or hair accessories.

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Habitat For Humanity will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, February 29th at the Mt. Iron Community Center. There will be a social hour at 5:00 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:00. The evening will include live music and an auction. Tickets are \$50.00. RSVP by February 16th.

## COVENANT KIDS CONGO

“I used to get sick a lot because our school toilets weren’t clean,” says Sandra, 12 years old.

There was nowhere for students to wash their hands afterwards, and the toilets themselves were unhygienic. But with the support of generous sponsors like you, we built a new borehole and water pump at Sandra’s school. We also built two blocks of toilets—one for boys and one for girls—with four stalls in each block. These new facilities include multiple taps.

“After going to the toilet, I now have a suitable place to wash my hands,” Sandra says. My friends and I are studying in a clean environment so I don’t get sick like I used to. Thank you, Covenant Kids Congo!”

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Today, dear Lord, I’m 80.  
and there’s much I haven’t done.  
I hope, dear Lord, you’ll let me live until I’m 81.  
But then if I haven’t finished all I want to do,  
Would you please let me stay awhile until I’m 82?  
So many places I want to go, so very much to see,  
do you think that you could manage to make it 83?  
The world is changing very fast,  
there is so much more in store.  
I’d like it very much to live until I’m 84.  
And if by then I’m still alive, I’d like to stay till 85.  
More plans will be up in the air,  
so I’d really like to stick and see what happens  
to the world when I turn 86  
.I know, dear Lord, it’s much to ask  
(and it must be nice in heaven).  
but I’d really like to stay until I’m 87.  
I know by then I won’t be fast,  
and sometimes will be late,  
but it would be so pleasant to be around at 88.  
I still have seen so many things  
and had a wonderful time.  
so I’m sure that I’ll be willing to leave at 89.  
Just one more thing I’d like to say, dear Lord,  
I thank you kindly, but if it’s still okay with you,  
I’d love to live to 90.

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<b>Roger Johnston</b>	16th
<b>Steve Skogman</b>	16th
<b>Stephanie Carlson</b>	25th

### AMONG US

**Shirley Koski** spent about a week visiting a friend in Florida.

### BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the March calendar need to be emailed to [pogy56@q.com](mailto:pogy56@q.com) by Sunday, February 18th. Weekly bulletin items should be emailed to [wbchris@q.com](mailto:wbchris@q.com) or [gailjohnston@gmail.com](mailto:gailjohnston@gmail.com) by Wednesday of the week in which they will appear.

Items for the March issue of the Lamplighter should be turned in by Sunday, February 18th or emailed to [wbchris@q.com](mailto:wbchris@q.com). Remember that we are always looking for items of interest for the “Among Us” column.





## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

You are cordially invited to celebrate with North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity at the **Building the Future with Habitat** dinner and silent auction, celebrating the 267 lives changed in 73 families through simple, decent, affordable home ownership throughout North St. Louis County. The dinner will be held beginning at 5:15 p.m. on Thursday, February 4th, at Mountain Iron Community Center. The evening will feature an elegant dinner, live music, a program, games, and a silent auction. To reserve tickets, e-mail [habitat@nslchfh.org](mailto:habitat@nslchfh.org) or call 749-8910. Tickets are \$35 per individual in advance and \$40 at the door.

## COVENANT MISSIONARY PROFILE: KARL & SUE PETERSON (MEXICO)

### COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES

It is pasty time again, and we need many helpers to make the days run smoothly. The dates are [Friday, January 22](#), beginning about noon and [Saturday, January 23](#), beginning at 7:00. We need a good crew by 7:00 to get the ovens full as soon as possible. Sign-up sheets are now available in the social hall.

Early bird Triennial registrations are due [January 15](#), so it is time to fill out those forms.

Project Day will meet on Tuesday, [January 19th](#). We will continue making lap robes.

**Karl:** I have focused on four areas: congregational vitality, theological education administration, local church leadership, and mission team administration. In the area of congregational vitality I wear two hats. I am co-leading the vitality team with Sue at the Tlalpan Covenant Church in Mexico City. At the national level I am on the leadership team for congregation vitality, co-teaching seminars, visiting congregational leaders, and leading the process of contextualizing the ministry in the Mexico City area churches. I am serving as the dean of the Mexico Covenant seminary, which has been asked to develop the orientation/ordination course for pastors who have studied in other seminaries. In addition to co-leading the vitality team at the Tlalpan church, I continue to serve as a deacon at the church. It is an exciting and scary time as the congregation vitality is

slowly beginning to re-create a congregational culture that is healthy and missional. Last January I became the country coordinator for Mexico. I am responsible for coordinating the Covenant missionary team serving in Mexico and communication with the Serving Globally staff in Chicago. I am also serving as country treasurer until we begin our home assignment ministry in July 2016.

**Sue:** After many years of prayer for revitalization in Mexico, the Tlalpan Covenant Church is the first one to embark on the journey to vitality. I am co-leading the team with Karl while I lead the commission on the history of our church. Living out our relational covenant is a challenge and a blessing as God works in our lives and our congregation. I continue to develop and facilitate a weekly women's Bible study series and disciple several women from the group. More women attended the Covenant Women's Retreat this year with hopes for many more next year. My first friend in Mexico City (2002) gave her life to the Lord just after Christmas last year, and it has been a highlight for me to begin discipling her. I continue to train Sunday school teachers to train others to teach, develop VBS material, and teach the 5th and 6th-grade Sunday school class. We adopted a new format this year turning Sunday school into the Sunday club, allowing more people to minister and be trained. I was also asked by the Tlalpan church leaders to lead the worship team as we go through a year of transition. The last Sunday of each month you can find me hanging out with the youth in a variety of activities as we walk with them and encourage them to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

## COVENANT TRUST COMPANY

### The Next Generation

What is a millennial?

The definition varies a bit, but generally speaking, a millennial is a person born between 1980 and 2000. It was believed that the generation of children born during this period would be drastically different than the generation before them — Generation X. Simply calling this new generation “Generation Y” seemed inadequate, and so the designation “millennial” was coined in 1991, partly inspired by the new millennium that was only a few years away. The term helps us identify a large group of people who are facing financial issues that other generations haven't had in the past — at least, not on the same scale. Lule Demmissie, Managing Director at TD Ameritrade, summarizes those financial issues succinctly:

“Millennials are...earning less, their median net worth is down, and many face decades of student loan payments. Pair that with the uncertainty surrounding their retirement, and they appear to be facing a less-than-bright future. Not to mention that one in five millennials is also providing financial support to aging parents to the tune of \$18,250 a year...It's no wonder they're pushing off having families, starting businesses, or buying houses.”

Considering all this, it's not too surprising that a recent survey by [howmuch.net](http://howmuch.net) revealed that over 50% of millennials have less than \$1,000 in savings, or that a Nerd Wallet survey showed 90% of millennials don't believe they'll have enough money for retirement.

So what can we do to help millennials?

In addition to offering no-minimum IRAs, Covenant Trust Company is invested in the financial education of millennials and future generations. We keep a personal finance blog and are now producing our own videos and podcasts to edify people of all ages. But studies show that young adults, teens, and children learn about money from their families. According to a survey by Mint, they want to learn how banks, credit cards, and investing work; how to manage money; and know more about their family's financial situation.

So if you have a millennial or younger person in your life, we encourage you to talk to them about money: find out what they want to know, tell them your financial story, and share whatever wisdom you can pass along. If you would like some resources, contact Steve Allison, our local Financial Services Representative, at [1-877-768-1766](tel:1-877-768-1766) or email him at

[srallison@covenanttrust.com](mailto:srallison@covenanttrust.com). We would be happy to be part of that conversation.

—Heather Linduia  
Community Connect Coordinator

## THANK YOU NOTE

I would like to say thank you on behalf of the 2015 Community Connect Committee for your donation/ support of the event. There was a great turnout of attendees and service providers. We were able to distribute many items to those in need and connect these individuals to some of the 25 service providers that may be able to assist them ongoing,

There were 256 households that attended this event serving 546 individuals. Of the 256 households:

- roughly 78% had an annual household income equal to or less than \$11,490 per year
- 60% live in a rental property
- 15% own their now home
- 20% are living with family or friends, on the street, in a shelter, or are in treatment
- 58% are on medical assistance
- 11% have no insurance
- \*63% were women heads of households

We were able to distribute:

- 325 bags of groceries
- 181 bottles of shampoo and bars of soap
- 188 toothbrushes and toothpaste
- 141 bags of personal care items
- 200 \$10 gas cards
- 350 children's sweatshirts
- 131 adult winter jackets
- 90 children's winter jackets
- 205 blankets
- 45 pairs of snow pants
- 268 scarves
- 338 pairs of gloves and mittens

Thank you again for your support. It is only with the help of the community that we can make this event a success for those in need. We have begun planning for Community Connect 2016, which will be held in Hibbing. We hope for your continued support.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

<b>Gail Johnston</b>	6th
<b>Heather Roark</b>	28th

## BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the February calendar need to be e-mailed or in the church office by Sunday, January 17th. Weekly bulletin items must be e-mailed or brought to the church office by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday. E-mailed items need to have either "calendar" or "bulletin" in the subject line.

Items for the February issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, January 24th. 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.





First Covenant volunteers at the Salvation Army

## AMONG US

In recent months we have welcomed four new members into the fellowship of our church. **Carolyn Erickson** and **Roger Johnston** were received on their confession of faith. **Pastor Jeffrey Jones** and **Heather Jones** transferred their membership from the Biwabik Covenant Church.

**Carolyn Erickson** spent Christmas in California with her daughter and family.

**Shirley Koski's** family spent Christmas together at the home of Lynette and family in Utah.