

# FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

*First Covenant Church*  
*Virginia, Minnesota*  
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*[www.firstcovenantvirginia.org](http://www.firstcovenantvirginia.org)*

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## **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: THE TWO LISTS**

I was fortunate to spend time with an enigmatic man named Robert during a very special period of my life. Robert taught me many things during our days together, and this time of year reminds me of one particular interaction we had.

"Now that you are becoming more aware," Robert said, "you need to begin to set goals for yourself so you don't lose the momentum you have built."

"Like New Year's resolutions?" I asked.

"That's an interesting idea," he smirked. "Let's do that."

By then I was used to his cryptic responses, so I knew something was up because of the way his eyes sparkled as he let out an impish laugh.

"Tonight's assignment is to make two lists," Robert continued. "The first is a list of all the New Year's resolutions you **WANT** to keep, and the second is a list of all the New Year's resolutions you **WILL** keep. Write the **WANT** List first, and when you have exhausted all of your ideas, then write the second list on another sheet of paper."

That night I went home and spent several hours working on the two lists. The **WANT** List felt overwhelming at first, but after a while I got into writing all the things I had always wanted to do if the burdens of life hadn't gotten in the way. After nearly an

hour, the list swelled to fill the entire page and contained nearly all of my ideas of an ideal life. The second list was much easier, and I was able to quickly commit ten practical resolutions that I felt would be both realistic and helpful.

The next day, I met Robert in front of the local food Co-op, where we seemed to have most of our enlightening conversations. "Tell me about your two lists," Robert said as the familiar smirk crept onto his face.

"The first list contains all the things I **SHOULD** do if I completely changed my life to be the person I always wanted to be. And the second list contains all the things I **COULD** do by accepting my current life, and taking realistic steps towards the life I want to lead."

"Let me see the second list," he said.

I handed him the second list, and without even looking at it, he ripped the paper into tiny pieces and threw it in the nearby garbage can. His disregard for the effort I had put into the list annoyed me at first, but after I calmed down I began to think about the first list in a different light. In my heart, I knew the second list was a cop out, and the first list was the only one that really mattered.

"And now, the first list." Robert bowed his head and held out both of his hands.

I purposefully handed him the first list and held his gaze for several seconds, waiting for him to begin reading the page. After an unusually long silence, he discarded that list also.

The he handed me a folded sheet of paper."On this sheet there is not something that you wish you could do or something you can do but rather something you must do."

I opened the folded sheet to find just one word scrawled across the page:

**"LOVE"**

*"A new commandment I give unto you—that you love one another as I have loved you"—Jesus*

## **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 CHIRCH**

### **Ushers:**

Jan. 7—Roger & Judy Linden  
Jan. 14—Roger & Gail Johnston  
Jan. 21—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen  
Jan. 28—Bob & Mary Nelson  
Feb. 4—Shirley Koski

### **Caretakers for the week of . . .**

Jan. 7—Lucas & Cassie Hill  
Jan. 14—Jan. 14—Roger & Gail Johnston  
Jan. 21—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen  
Jan. 28—Shirley Koski & Barb Knapper  
Feb. 4—Russ & Stephanie Carlson

## **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

**11/1/23-11-/30/23**

Checking account balance as Nov.. 1st: **\$54,126.39**

General Fund income for current period: **\$6150.00**

Other income: **\$1035.42**

Total expenses for current period:  
**\$10,876.52**

Checking account balance as of Nov. 30th:  
**\$56,570.29**

## **ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The annual Church Business Meeting will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 28th. Church members and friends are encouraged to attend as we review last year and look forward to then year. Reports should be turned in no ;ater than January 21st.

## **COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES**

We were glad to again have our annual smorgasbord and were very pleased with the good turnout. Thanks to all who helped make this possible and many thanks to all who helped with cleanup .

We donated 10 lap robes to inFaith's ministry to seniors. Project Day will resume on January 16 at 9:30. We have a lot of new fabrics to work with but need more workers.

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We have been able to track the 18 Operation Christmas Child boxes and found that some were shipped to Nigeria and some to Paraguay.

We have been encouraged to shop for bargains all year long. While the best deal for school supplies is generally the end of summer, checking the clearance aisles can sometimes turn up great deals. Keeping an eye on final clearance clothing racks at Walmart can yield shorts, t-shirts, hats, etc. for \$1.00. While the box is only the size of a shoebox, it is amazing how much we can pack in.

We will keep a box out for bargain hunters and hope to send more boxes next year.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

<b>Gail Johnston</b>	6th
<b>Ed Pajunen</b>	31st

## BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the February calendar need to be e-mailed to [\*\*pogy567@q.com\*\*](mailto:pogy567@q.com) by Sunday, January 21st. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to [\*\*wbchris@q.com\*\*](mailto:wbchris@q.com) or [\*\*gailjohnston@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:gailjohnston@gmail.com) by Wednesday of the week in which they are to appear.

Items for the February issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, January 21st. 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.