

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

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April 2024



First Covenant Church
Virginia, Minnesota

www.firstcovenantvirginia.org

I HAVE SEEN THE LORD!

You might think that someone like myself doesn't deserve to see –because I'm Thomas, the one who demanded not only to see, but also to touch.

Perhaps you don't want to hear the voice of a doubter – but I'm more than that. I am more than my doubts and questions. You see, I loved Jesus!

I was more ready than the others to make that dangerous trip back into the vicinity of Jerusalem where the crowds had actually started to stone Jesus.

That Jesus –he had no fear! His presence inspired courage, so I spoke up loyally, “Let us also go that we may die with him!”

The dying part – well, it turned out that Jesus was Master of life –Lazarus was raised. It was so clear—I knew for sure!—until he himself was killed, apparently willingly. It wasn't so clear at all!

I was the one who pointed out to Jesus that the teaching wasn't as self-evident as he seemed to think. We didn't know where he was going. And he said he was on the way. What a way! What a life!

I need to be sure. The others had tried to reassure me by saying that they had seen the Lord. But I'm no secondhand person. I want to know on my own. Is that so bad to want to be sure? Can you understand that?

Jesus knew me and loved me—especially because of my usual big honest questions. He knew I hid nothing.

So when he came to us once again, he approached me before I had opened my mouth and said, “Thomas, I'm here. You may end your doubting. Then I knew! This was my Lord! Here is the risen Christ. I had found my Lord and my God.

My name is Thomas, and I have seen the Lord!

—Mary May Swartzentruder



Google Art image of Doubting Thomas

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:

- Apr. 7— Roger & Gail Johnston
- Apr. 14— Wayne & Bernie Christianson
- Apr. 21— Bob & Mary Nelson
- Apr. 28— Shirley Koski
- May 5 — Roger & Judy Linden

Church caretakers for the week of . . .

- Apr. 7— Russ & Stephanie Carlson
- Apr. 14— Brian & Julie Hill
- Apr. 21— Jeffrey & Heather Jonez
- Apr. 28— Mike & Kathy Hannay
- May 5 — Roger & Judy Linden

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

2/1/24-2/29/24

Checking account balance as Feb. 1st:\$32,303.57
 General Fund income for current period: . \$5,224.00
 Other income: \$86.00
 Total expenses for current period: \$3,141.19
 Checking account balance as of Feb.29th: \$34,586.38

Adult Christian Education

Starting April 7th we will be gathering together to go through the Prayer Week Material from the Covenant.

Please plan to stay after Fellowship time for this time.

Covenant Women Salad Supper

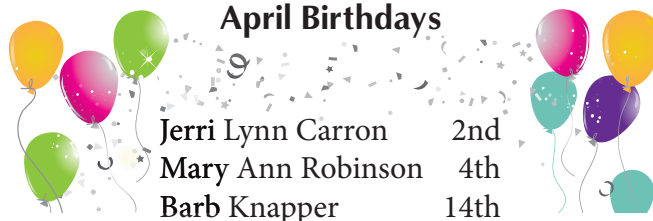
Our Covenant Women Salad Supper will held at 6:00 on Friday, April 12. Liz Burton from Cook Covenant Church will be our speaker. We encourage you to invite friends to join us for this inspirational evening. Signup sheets for attending and bringing food are available in the Social Hall. This is our first salad supper since Covid so we are hoping for a good attendance. We have invited the Cook Covenant and Biwabik Covenant ladies.

Our Sympathy

Our Christian sympathy goes out to the family of Greg Barnes. Greg passed away on March 20th.

Our sympathy to Caroline Erickson on the passing of her brother Richard Erickson on March 20th

April Birthdays



Jerri Lynn Carron	2nd
Mary Ann Robinson	4th
Barb Knapper	14th

BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES



Items for the May calendar need to be e-mailed to: pogy567@q.com by Sunday, April 21st.

Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to: christiansenwayne4@gmail.com , by Wednesday of the week in which they are to appear.

Items for the May issue of the Lamplighter should be sent to: christiansenwayne4@gmail.com by Sunday , April 21st.

Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the "Among Us" column.



Sweden—Barbara Swanson
Lake Superior
Birthday: March 3
Anniversary: November 6
barb.swanson@covchurch.org

young people to follow Jesus in the US to really wanting the wisdom of the 82-year-old American team member on how to live sustainably through-out life while he follows Jesus.

Barbara Jean Swanson

Oh, dear NW conference WM friends!

You do realize how important you are to us, right?

We value your partnership in ministry in so many ways. Many of you are in congregations that are actively involved in our financial and prayer support, but also you give so generously thru your SIM project initiative! We thank you for that!

Since 2021, we have had a project within Serve Globally called Discipleship Resources for Sweden. These are retreats intended to build up relationships between native Swedes and New Swedes (the refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers) who have landed in Sweden in the past 10 years or so.

This project has been super successful, and here's a glimpse into how your funding blessed us in 2023...

We had a team from a supporting church in MI visit us in October 2023, and part of their time together with us included a Discipleship Retreat at a nearby retreat center. Fourteen ~ count them 14!! ~ young adults, both Swedes and immigrants, came and joined in on the fun. We rented space at a local Christian retreat center, where they were able to provide meals and coffee breaks for us. Our energies, in turn, were focused on how to gather a group of 14 local young adults together with a group of 8 Americans (and 2 missionaries thrown in just for good measure!). The program was simple and relaxed. Nothing fancy, just good coffee, good food, good fellowship around the tables. And some games! We set up the main gathering room like a normal living room, and then divided up the American guests to go for a walk and talk together with the Swedes in the room. We had time for a Q&A, which was super impactful as the young Swedes and immigrants asked questions to our American guests....spanning the range of what's it like for