

# FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

First Covenant Church  
Virginia, Minnesota  
741-7117

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

Volume XLVI II- Number 5  
May 2024

## As Easy as Brushing Hair

Beth sitting at an airport terminal, waiting to board a plane, pulled out her Bible and started reading. All of a sudden she felt as if the people sitting there around her, were looking at her. She looked up, but realized that they were looking just over her head, in the direction right behind her.

She turned around to see what everyone was looking at, and when she did, she saw a stewardess pushing a wheelchair, with an old man sitting in it. He had this long white hair that was all tangled and such a mess. His face was really, really wrinkled, and he didn't look friendly at all.

She didn't know why, but she felt drawn to the man, and thought at first that God wanted her to witness to him. In her mind she was thinking, "Oh, God, please, not now, not here."

No matter what she did, she couldn't get the man off of her mind, and all of a sudden she knew what God wanted her to do. She was supposed to brush this old man's hair.

She went and knelt down in front of the old man, and said, "Sir may I have the honor of brushing your hair for you?"

He said "What?"

She thought, *Oh great, he's hard of hearing.* Again, a little louder, she said, "Sir, may I have the honor of brushing your hair for you?"

He answered, "If you are going to talk to me, you are going to have to speak up, I am practically deaf."

So this time, she was almost yelling, "Sir may I please have the honor of brushing your hair for you?"

Everyone was watching to see what his response would be. The old man just looked at her confused, and said "Well, I guess if you really want to."

She said, "I don't even have a brush, but I thought I would ask anyway."

He said, "Look in the bag hanging on the back of my chair; there is a brush in there." So she got the brush out and started brushing his hair. (She has a little girl with long hair, so she has had lots of practice getting tangles out, and knew how to be gentle with him.) She worked for a long time, until every last tangle was out.

Just as she was finishing up, she heard the old man crying, and she went and put her hands on his knees, kneeling in front of him again looking directly into his eyes, and said, "Sir, do you know Jesus?"

He answered, "Yes, of course I know Jesus. You see, my bride told me she couldn't marry me unless I knew Jesus, so I learned all about Jesus, and asked Him to come into my heart many years ago, before I married my bride."

He continued, "You know, I am on my way home to go and see my wife. I have been in the hospital for a

long time and had to have a special surgery in this town far from my home. My wife couldn't come with me, because she is so frail herself. I was so worried about how terrible my hair looked, and I didn't want her to see me looking so awful, but I couldn't brush my hair, all by myself."

Tears were rolling down his cheeks, as he thanked Beth for brushing his hair. He thanked her over and over again. She was crying, people all around witnessing this were crying, and as they were all boarding the plane, the stewardess, who was also crying, stopped her, and asked, "Why did you do that?"

And right there was the opportunity, the door that had been opened to share with someone else, the love of God. We don't always understand God's ways, but be ready. He may use us to meet the need of someone else, as He met the need of this old man, and in that moment, also calling out to a lost soul who needed to know about His love.

— Author Unknown

## **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:**

May 5—Roger & Judy Linden  
May 12—Mike & Kathy Hannay  
May 19—Brian & Julie Hill  
May 26—No Sewrvice  
Jun. 2—Roger & Gail Johnston

## **Church caretakers for the week of , , ,**

May 5—Roger & Judy Linden  
May 12—Lucas & Cassie Hill  
May 19—Roger & Gail Johnston  
May 26—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen  
June 2—Ken & linda Pogorelec

## **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT 3/1/24-3/31/24**

Checking account balance as Mar. 1st: **\$34,586.38**

General Fund income for current period: **\$7324.00**

Other income: **\$1102.83**

Total expenses for current period: **\$6234.30**

Checking account balance as of Mar. 31st:  
**\$38,376.08**

## **COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES**

We have been busy on Project Day using a lot of fabric we have recently been given. We have a number of laprobe tops ready to finish and have also been working on some items for the shoeboxes.

## **WOMEN MINISTRIES SPRING RENWAL**

April 5-6 , 2024 Women Ministries Spring Renewal with breakout sessions. There were four attendees from First Covenant

It was a fun road trip on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, of catching up, stories of Oaxaca, and then we arrived in Grand Forks, ND. And after Google took us around the entire mall parking lot we arrived at Hope Covenant Church. We were welcomed by warm and energetic volunteers and beautiful worship music by five talented women. This event was almost can-



celebrated due to low registration, but they held out hope and said let's go for it. Sure glad they did. The room with round tables and a stage was full with just about a hundred women! Praise and hallelujah! Guest speaker, Kecia Stroot, opened with a message of being **Joyful**

**in Hope.** She had many great analogies, one of which was about a dog that just couldn't get the hang of potty training. They knew this dog would have just loved to be the life of the party with family in the evenings and even snuggle in bed with the kids, but had to be kept in the porch. She thought, "if you could just get this one thing, I could give you all this." And then paused to wonder, what in our lives God may think the same thing about us. [CR]

Saturday morning, as we do every year, our Women's Ministry President conducted our annual meeting. We had the usual procedures, reports, and election of board members whose terms are expiring. In addition, our President and Consultant Rachel gave reports, which are very informative, about the past year and what is in store for our future. 2025 Renewal is planned for March 14-15 at Crossview Covenant in Mankato. We also learned work is being done to hold Triennials again! [SK]

After our young and talented worship team led us in a number of songs, our keynote speaker, Kecia Stroot, used many examples from her own life and that of her family and of familiar Biblical characters to make her points. She emphasized that God doesn't need our help but chooses to use us. We were encouraged to use our gifts even if we think they are too small to make a difference. God can take our little and turn it into something big. [BC]

After our first breakout session (several to choose from), we had a delicious lunch of soups, salad and a generous array of desserts. Saturday afternoon we again gathered after our second break-out session with news of the following: There are 7 Women Ministries presidents out of 10 ECC conferences holding monthly meetings via Zoom. They are in pursuit of being officially recognized at the 2025 Covenant Annual Meeting.

Worship continued and our speaker, Kecia, emphasized as Christians, we must "go out and meet people where they are", as Jesus did. Many, many personal examples were given, illustrating our theme.

[A Glimpse of Grief Share](#) – Milly Prachar from Roseau (reflections from a session) [HJ]

Visit [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org). By entering this zip code on this website, I found two grief groups, one in Virginia and one in Cook. Both are meeting online, and it says there is no cost, though you might want to buy a workbook. Check out their website for more resources. Milly started by sharing her own story of the loss of her young husband and her sister. Many in the group shared that their grief was mired in divorce (and some lost their church family due to same), illness, death, and other circumstances. My notes state: Remember, there are many kinds of grief. Grief can be internal or external. There are many effects of grief, including emotional, social and physical (brain fog and broken heart syndrome). Grief is not a straight path. There are grief ambushes, sudden waves of sadness. Embrace grief...the waves will calm. We don't master grief; we learn to live with it. Milly shared what healing might look like, and what "stuck" might look like. Finally, how can we use our pain to help others? She offered the following ideas:

- Acknowledge the loss; show up, say very little, listen more (*I heard what happened and I'm sorry*);
- Don't assume, compare, try to fix, be in a hurry, make it about you, be put off by tears, and don't be curious; Instead say, "My heart breaks for you." "I can't imagine how things are for you." "One of my favorite memories of \_\_\_\_\_ is..." "I am so sorry for your loss, "I am so sad with you, I really miss \_\_\_\_\_, I am sorry you have to go through this".
- Send a note, and then send another; Offer to do an errand like grocery shopping. Offer to find clothes for the funeral for family members.

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Have you found any bargains? Long-sleeved T shirts were on clearance at Target for \$1.50. Some bandanas were on sale in the clearance



rack at Hobby Lobby. Bandanas are great for all ages as they can be used in many ways. Besides our filled boxes we would like to send fillers this year. Some ideas would be hats, mittens or gloves, balls (tennis balls work well), school supplies, and small to medium stuffed animals.

## AMONG US

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of **Greg Barnes**, who died at the age of 59 on March 20th after a long battle with cancer. He was part of our church family for 17 years, during which time he served as our worship accompanist. His memorial service was held on Good Friday at Heritage Trail Bible Church.

Shirley Koski traveled to Salt Lake, Utah, to attend a Soroptomist conference, after which she spent several days with daughter Lynette and family.

## A NOTE FROM COVENANT PARK

Greetings! The staff at CPBC wanted you to know that your congregation is in our thoughts and prayers for God's leading, provision, and blessing as you continue in your mission to serve God and others in bringing his sheep home.

## BULLETIN, CALENDAR, AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

### MESABI RANGE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Mesabi Range Youth For Christ will hold Championing Hope Gala from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 9th, at Mt. Iron Community Center. There will be a social hour and silent auction at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, and a program and live auction at 7:00. Tickets \$55 per person and \$100 per couple are available at Laurentian Chamber of Commerce in Virginia.

Items for the June calendar need to be e-mailed to [pogy567@q.com](mailto:pogy567@q.com) by Sunday, March 19th. 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 June issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, May 26th. 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.

## THANK YOU NOTE



Quad Cities Food shelf extends its thanks for our church's donation of 24 pounds of food and \$175 in cash.

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

<b>Roger Linden</b>	1st
<b>Sue Arvola</b>	4th
<b>Darrell Knapper</b>	7th
<b>Ken Pogorelec</b>	8th
<b>Sid Reindahl</b>	17th
<b>Carolyn Erickson</b>	25th
<b>Gunnar Carlson</b>	31st