



Monday Night Prayer Meeting

Join others each Monday night at 6:30pm on a Zoom call for a time of prayer. You will receive an email link to follow.



Financial Update

During the month of January we were able to help a family with a fuel card to drive to a medical appointment out of town.

From January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 our total of all funds increased \$51,010. We saw a reduction in spending in areas that were affected by COVID restrictions. We have also experienced a reduction in 2020 spending and the 2021 budget by wise use of God's resources. We specifically cut costs with our telephone, copier, and anti-virus.

Blessing,
Nick Steines

Leadership Sees Good Days Unfolding



As we approach our February 7th Annual Meeting of this Congregation, we have a strong sense of God's blessing through one of the most unusual years of our lives. The annual reports in the meeting will detail much of this, but the blessings include our recent addition of Marco Griffith as Associate for Youth Ministry. Both Marco and his wife, Rachel, grew up in this congregation and bring a remarkable set of

gifts and commitment to this work. They will arrive here about a month from now, and we look forward to that day.

We have finished this unusual year in a good place financially, acknowledging that giving levels have been diminished by the pandemic, but celebrating that we have exceeded our expenses. Now, we take on an additional challenge of added staff, and are grateful for the on-going support of this generous congregation as we consider a reasonable increase to our budget beyond the giving levels of 2020.

In terms of ministry, nothing could be more exciting than the support we are seeing for our newly developing Ministry Teams, which will work alongside our administrative Leadership Team to develop and activate increasing ministry in and through this congregation. The details of this are laid out in Article III of our church by-laws, and we are pleased to be moving into this exciting new phase. Pastor Seth will give leadership to these gifted people.

In addition to pivoting our way through the pandemic, we have added or shifted staff over the past year in five positions. In chronological order they are Stacy Hall as Organizational Intern; Seth Bjornrud as Lead Pastor; Skip Ohlquist as Custodian; Tess Vollom as Interim Worship Arts Director; and Marco Griffith as Associate for Youth Ministry. We also said a warm farewell to Interim Pastor, Dan Johnson, in June, and Minister of Visitation, Ed Natysin, in August.

Two very fine Leadership Team members, Nick Steines and Tom Holm Sr., will complete their terms on February 7th, and we just said goodbye to our Vice Chair, Mike Wulff, who took a job in Toronto. These three positions will be filled at our annual meeting, along with positions on our Nominating Committee.

Now that we have a complete staff, an expanding ministry focus, and the vision God is speaking to us through our pastor, more and more people are re-committing to what God is working in our midst. As Pastor Henry Blackaby has said in *Experiencing God*, 'Our task is to see where God is at work and then to join with him.' We believe good days are unfolding at the Covenant Church.

Alan Johnson, Chair



All In & All Out

This month, we are introducing a new song called "Christ Be Magnified", and it talks about living a life fully devoted to God no matter the cost.

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?"

- Luke 9.23-25

Lose your life and you will find it. It's not the easiest thing to do, but it is exactly what Jesus has called us to do. Our hearts long for more than just church on Sunday and maybe a prayer or two a week. You and I are created by God to worship Him. Worship is our native cry, the inmost melody burning deep inside of us. Together, with all of creation, we're called to magnify Christ!

When we submit to Jesus and let our old selves die, we are transformed, resurrected, and made new in Him. While there are sacrifices we need to make in order to follow Jesus, what we receive in return is so much better. We need to be faithful to Him and recognize and let go of the idols in our lives, the things that are trying to hold our attention, and choose to be "all in" for Christ as he is for us. Will you join me in that commitment to Him today? Are you willing to lose your life to gain new life in Him?

"Were the whole Earth echoing His eminence
His name would burst from sea and sky
From rivers to the mountain tops
We'd hear Christ be magnified"



Mark your Calendar for Missions Conference 2021!

March 5-14

Whatever It Takes
Philippians 1.18

Schedule is as follows:

- **Friday, Mar 5**—6:30pm
Voice of the Martyrs, virtual event, (meet at the church)
- **Saturday, Mar 6** — 6:30pm
Dinner Party via Zoom
- **Sunday, Mar 7** — 10:30am
Worship Service
- **Monday, Mar 8** — 6:30pm
Zoom Prayer Meeting
- **Wednesday, Mar 10** — 6:30pm
Zoom Discussion—'How to Decide which Missionaries to Support Personally'
- **Saturday, Mar 13** — 9am
'Brunch' & Prayer with Missionaries (Via Zoom)
- **Sunday, Mar 14** — 10:30am
Worship Service with Matt Keller

Mission's Update

Following are updates from a few of our missionaries that we support. Please pray for them as God brings them to mind.

Steve and Barb Swanson—Sweden- They were thankful to celebrate Christmas in Sweden after spending 2 months in the US waiting for the correct Swedish residence cards to come. They were able to go back with other paper work, but still need the cards.

Reuben and Susan Mains—Grenada- There have been very few cases of COVID, but the schools are closed. They are praying that they can open again. Also Susan would like to visit her 91 year old mother in Texas when travel restrictions are lifted.

Tim & Mary Sue Austin—Senegal- They are thankful that several family members could come from the US for Christmas. Praise that their school has been able to operate in person this year. They hope to come to the US this summer.

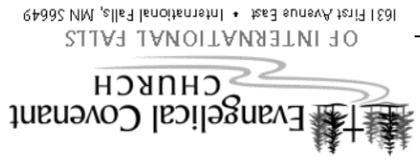
Colleen Estes—Pikangikum ON- She is thankful for the continuous support in prayer, encouragement and finances. They have not had "in person" school, but she is ministering to teens, grieving families, and is holding Sunday school classes.



Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Int'l. Falls, MN
Permit No. 1

Return Service Requested

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MATTHEW	▶ ACTS	▶ PSALMS	▶ EXODUS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:21-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:22-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 16:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:20-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 16:16-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 26	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 17:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-12
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:22-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 17:16-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 28	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-15
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:38-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-18
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:18-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:24-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 31	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:44-58	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:23-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 32	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-26
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 33	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-29
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:22-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:13-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 34	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-31
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 32-33
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:21-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:27-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 36	<input type="checkbox"/> 34
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 37:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-37
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:13-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 37:23-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 38-40
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:12-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 38	▶ LEVITICUS
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:14-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 39	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-4
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-7
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:15-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 41	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 42	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-13
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:16-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:19-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 43	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:1-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 44	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:17-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:27-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-20
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 46	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:12-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:17-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 47	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25
			<input type="checkbox"/> 26-27



1631 First Avenue East • International Falls, MN 56649



A Cup of Coffee with Pastor Seth . . .

I recently realized that this summer our church will turn 95 years old. Isn't that amazing?? As such, we are beginning a discussion in the staff and leadership about the big celebration we will have on our 100 year anniversary in 2026. If you have never heard how the church got started there is a summary written on our website you can read. I was impressed by a line in a book that was created from the 50th anniversary:

The start of the Covenant Church in South Falls had it's grassroots in the hearts and minds of Mr. and Mrs. Hilmer Francis who requested the Covenant Northwest Conference to send their field evangelist A.B. Ost here to conduct evangelistic meetings in view of starting a Covenant work.

God gave Mr. and Mrs. Hilmer a vision for a church in International Falls and then they followed the Lord with that vision. For them to live was Christ. We have started a new series on Sundays in the book of Philippians called "To Live is Christ." The title is from Philippians 1.21 where the apostle Paul says "For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." As I reflect on this verse and the history of our church I also want the future of our church to be defined by Christ; Christ depending, Christ pursuing, Christ following. I believe Christ has led us to the hiring of Marco Griffith as our youth pastor to complete our staff team. I've never been more excited for the future of our church and I hope you are excited too!

Now may we move forward, as the founders of our church did, with Christ in our hearts and minds. May God give us a fresh vision for bringing the Gospel to our community. And May it be said of us that for us "To live is Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mercy, peace & love be yours in abundance.
Pastor Seth

In This Edition...

- Cup of Coffee with Pastor Seth
- Girls Bible Study
- Leadership Team
- Financial Update
- Covenant Kids
- People to Celebrate
- Celebrate Recovery
- Grief Share
- Worship Update
- FREE Opportunity
- Poem by Ruth
- Recipe Corner
- Missions

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- Feb 1 -- Beth Enns
-- Denise Kulig
- Feb 2 -- Todd Christianson
- Feb 3 -- Kay Larson
- Feb 4 -- Kaylin Hufnagle
-- Gunner Sears
- Feb 5 -- Gabriel Kostiuik
-- Cathy Morrison
-- Missy Ruelle
- Feb 7 -- Aila Aili
- Feb 8 -- Kenna Clayton
- Feb 9 -- Bonnie Frahm
-- Howie Hauge
- Feb 10 -- Danni Aili
- Feb 11 -- Alex Bissonnette
-- Cuyler Line
-- Cooper Line
-- Jim Peterson
- Feb 14 -- Carter Line
- Feb 15 -- Dave Austin
-- Carol Clement
-- Kathy Howdahl
-- Michelle Maxwell
- Feb 16 -- Mikko Aili
-- Dave Cassibo
-- Paul Galusha
-- Jim & Mary Hummel
- Feb 19 -- Paul Hjelle
-- Kerry Meyers
- Feb 20 -- Betty Hansen
-- Melissa Holt
-- Dan Zika
- Feb 21 -- Elaine Johnson
- Feb 22 -- Larry Arch
- Feb 23 -- Lex Jones
-- Isaac Jones
-- Debbie Peterson
-- Gerald Forsythe
- Feb 26 -- Seth Bjornrud

The entire church family is invited to attend the **Annual Congregational Meeting** on Sunday, February 7 11:45 am



It isn't too late to join Covenant Kids, but you must pre-register! To register your kids for the at-home program, go to www.ifallscovenant.org/covkids/. We are helping

families eat together, learn together and play together!

At 5pm, drive through the church parking lot to pick up your take-home meals and at-home activity kits. At 6pm, join us for music, Bible stories, and more when our weekly program will be posted to our website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. It will be prerecorded, so you and your kids can watch at any time that fits your schedule. Then, open your at-home activity kits for crafts, games, and more fun activities to do together with your kids.



Recipe Corner

Sour Cream Chocolate Chip Muffins

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup butter melted and cooled
- 2 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/4 cups mini chocolate chips; more for topping
- Coarse sugar for topping; optional

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a medium bowl stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, & salt. Make a well and add the buttermilk, sour cream, eggs, vanilla, & melted butter. Begin to mix, add the chocolate chips, & continue to mix only until combined. You can sprinkle a few chocolate chips or coarse sugar on top if desired. Bake at 425 for 5 minutes, then reduce heat to 375 and bake another 10-12 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Makes 12-16



During Pastor Seth's visits to serve communion to a dear lady in our church, Ruth Vacura, she shared with him two poems that she wrote. The first was in the January newsletter & following is the other one. May Ruth's words bless & encourage you.

I Walk with Jesus

I am happy with my Savior
I am walking by His side
He is holding tight my hand
He will always be my guide

I will follow in His footsteps
Through the strong and raging times
I've accepted Him as Savior
In my heart He will abide

Oh dear brother; Oh dear sister!
Won't you let Him be your guide?



Girls Bible Study

Hi! I am Mikaela Hultstrand and I am excited to lead the teen girls through a 6-week Bible study on the book of Philippians. In an ever-changing world, we will focus on the joy and hope that is anchored in Jesus.

I have had the opportunity to be part of many different Bible studies and they have had a significant impact on my life. I now look forward to extending that opportunity to teen girls and learning and growing alongside them.



FREE

Globally, an estimated 4.7 million persons are caught in sex trafficking today.

Approximately 250,000–350,000 American children and youth are at risk for sex trafficking each year.

People who have been marginalized are also being deemed disposable and thus usable for the demoralizing purposes of those with power and privilege. The exploitation of those targeted through sex trafficking continues to attack the Imago Dei; marring, and harming trafficking victims, the traffickers, and the communities where economies of sexual exploitation flourish.

As a result, sex trafficking victims are not only robbed of their dignity and freedoms created by God, but often suffer substantial economic costs due to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, as well as diminished employment opportunity.

These patterns reveal the intersectionality that makes the most vulnerable people in our societies the ones most likely to be victims of exploitation. Ethnic and racial minorities, women, children, immigrants, and those who are poverty stricken are prime targets for victimization. The injustices faced by those who are marginalized and abused are sadly not new. The Scriptures tell us stories of trafficked, oppressed, and marginalized people. We learn from Scripture that God has compassion on those who suffer unjustly, that God sees them and hears their cry, and that God calls God's people to usher in God's justice. Our core denominational identity as Mission Friends is rooted in its deep desire to seek to respond to God's call in Isaiah 1:17, "Learn to do good, seek justice, and encourage the oppressed" in our world. As a response to this call, Serve Globally and Love Mercy Do Justice are collaborating to address the evil of sex trafficking locally and globally through FREE, an anti-sex trafficking initiative of the Evangelical Covenant Church that calls the global church to Pray, Learn, Give, and Act, domestically and globally alongside our partners. You can learn more about the FREE initiative at www.covchurch.org/FREE or contact me for more information.