

Youth Ministry this Summer

Youth ministry has been off to a great start and we are excited for the weeks to come! Since starting up the youth program again we have been really focusing on the Gospel. In the weeks surrounding Easter we talked about Christ's journey to the Cross and His resurrection from the dead, and these last two weeks have been focused on who God is and about what it is to be human. All of these lessons have had the key points of God being holy, humans being sinful/deserving of God's wrath, yet God's unconditional/unexplainable love for us as made evident by Christ's death and resurrection. Through Him we are made into a New Creation and get to be in relationship with Him! It has been awesome talking about our glorious God who has adopted us!

With summer coming up quick, I have started to plan for what youth ministry will look like when we can be outdoors more. Currently, we plan on having several weekly activities to cultivate community and just have some fun! This would include ultimate frisbee, spikeball, beach days, hangout in the park days, camping, and of course a Bible study. During these activities I want youth to grow in relationship with me, with each other, and with our gracious God! I hope to have a lot of joy in our summer adventures and to incorporate Scripture reading and/or prayer in all our hangouts.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. *(Romans 15.13)*

On a more personal note, Rachel and I feel like we have seamlessly transitioned back to life in I Falls. We are coaching Jr. High Track and Field together, meeting with past friends, and hanging out with youth in various contexts as well. Multiple times this past week Rachel has said to me, "I am just so happy to be back in I Falls and continuing these relationships!" Our one-year anniversary is a month away, so I am by no means a marriage expert, but her happiness certainly seems like a good sign! We are both very blessed to be back in I Falls and are so excited about what God is doing and will continue to do here.

Grace be with you,
Marco



Boiler Replacement

It is time to talk about the old furnace in the basement of the church. This past winter, the furnace stopped working. Shannon's came and set up the furnace so that we would still have heat for the rest of the winter. But, before next winter we will have to either repair the old furnace or install a new furnace.

A brief history of the furnace. By the looks of the furnace, I would estimate that it was installed in the 1950s. It was originally a fuel oil furnace. In 1974, it was retrofitted to use natural gas instead of fuel oil. Since the furnace is so old, it might be difficult to find parts.

Shannon's recommends we replace it with a newer and more efficient one. Shannon's estimates that a new furnace will save us 25-30% on the amount of natural gas it uses. In 2019, we spent \$5,649 for gas in that furnace. In 2020, with less usage, we spent \$4,652. That would have resulted in a savings of \$1,400-\$1,700 in 2019 and \$1,100-\$1,400 in 2020.

We are going to add this topic to the agenda for the May 16th congregational meeting because if we decide to install a new furnace, Shannon's would need to do the work this summer. The cost of their bid to install a new furnace is \$29,500.

I would recommend that we install a new furnace. I look forward to discussing this with you at the meeting on May 16th.

Justin Carney,
Properties Officer



- May 1 -- Sixta Davies
-- Milo Larson
-- Abbie Sather
-- Benson Sather
- May 2 -- Anna Levene
-- Joel Pendergast
- May 3 -- Brady Hjelle
- May 4 -- Brooklyne Dowty
- May 5 -- Nieum Hultstrand
- May 8 -- Jenna Averill
-- David Hebig
-- Stephen Jones
-- Helen Lorette
-- Remi Veert
- May 9 -- Allen & Valerie Peterson
- May 10 -- Braden Skifstad
- May 11 -- Alatheia Boyer
-- Dave & Barb Cassibo
- May 12 -- Terri Anderson
- May 13 -- Gary Coran
-- Pat Hogan
- May 14 -- Gordon Dobbs
-- Wally & Carol Clement
- May 15 -- Tucky Dill
- May 16 -- Dave & Barb Herry
- May 17 -- Jeff Staudahar
- May 18 -- Polly Hebig
-- Mary Hummel
-- Phyllis Klein
-- Jerry Nyborg
-- Penny Zoupas
- May 19 -- Joe Griffith
-- Tom & Melissa Holt
- May 20 -- Samantha Holm
-- Laurel Marschalk
- May 21 -- Brock & Jenna Averill
-- Wayne & Jess Schrock
- May 22 -- Rita Forsythe
-- Allison Zika
- May 23 -- Kathy Galusha
-- Kim Morrison
-- Lucy Zika
- May 24 -- Trevor Galusha
-- Marco & Rachel Griffith
- May 25 -- Bryce Hjelle
-- Wendy St. Peter
- May 27 -- Austin & Anne Homkes
-- Walter & Joyce Kelly
- May 29 -- Charis Boyer
-- Chloe Hufnagle
-- Roger Williams
- May 30 -- Lindsy Christenson
-- Rod & Beth Enns

Worship & Sound Opportunities



I don't know about you, but I am so excited for the warmer weather that is slowly approaching us! There is something truly calming about being in the presence of God's creation and appreciating all that he made for us. It is hard to look at a blooming new flower, growing fruit on a tree, or birds in their nest and not see the hand of our Creator. From the smallest detail of an oak leaf, to the countless stars in the sky, all of nature was created to show our Creator's love for us and for us to enjoy. All of nature declares the Glory of God!

With summer right around the corner, I can't help but smile at the thought of Worship in the Park, parking lot services, and all of the other summer activities that we'll get to participate in together these next few months.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved in the worship band or sound booth, we are always in need of more singers and instrumentalists, as well as audio and tech team members! Please feel free to send me an email at tess.vollom@ifallscovenant.org to receive more information. What better time to get plugged in than right now? I can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for our church and the Worship Arts department this summer!

Blessings,

Tess Vollom

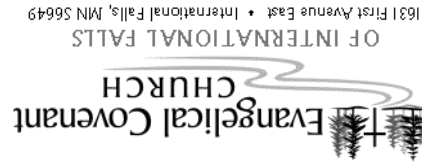




New Testament		Old Testament	
MARK		PSALMS	
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:33-50	2 COR.	<input type="checkbox"/> 95	1 SAMUEL
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 96	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:17-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 97	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:35-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 98	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 99	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-10
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:12-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 100	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-13
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:27-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 101	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 102	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-16
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 103	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-18
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:28-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 104	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 105	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 106:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:14-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 106:24-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-28
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:16-33		<input type="checkbox"/> 29-31
			2 SAMUEL
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:32-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 107	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:11-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 108	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:12-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 109	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-7
	GALATIANS		
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:32-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 110	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:43-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 111	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-12
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:53-65	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 112	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:66-72	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:15-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 113	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 114	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:16-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:21-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 115	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-19
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:33-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 116	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:42-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:13-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 117	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 118	<input type="checkbox"/> 23-24

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A Cup of Coffee with Pastor Seth . . .

What kind of church would we be if we were the church of your dreams? That is a question I've begun to pose to people in conversations. Now that we've got the church staff in place, and it feels like we are in the season of emerging from the pandemic it seems like the right time to dream out loud. So grab yourself a cup of coffee and dream with me. I'm going to spend the next few newsletters telling you three things I think about when I ask myself that question. The first thing the church of my dreams would be is a **Commissional** church. What I mean by that is a group of people who are passionate about making disciples of Jesus. That is the Great Commission that Jesus gave us.

Go and make disciples of all nations. -Matthew 28. 19a

When I asked people that question I got similar answers; "I want to be part of a church that is actively reaching out to people in need," "I want to be part of a church that shares the love of Christ with our neighbors."

We recently announced that the people of our church, in the middle of a pandemic, committed to give \$80,803 to missions, exceeding our goal of \$73,000. While I am excited about how we are going to be able to support our missionaries, I'm even more excited about what that says about our church - that we are committed to making disciples of all nations.

I want to be part of a disciple-making movement in International Falls. I want to be a place that raises people up, fully devoted followers of Christ, and sends them out. How about you? Is a Commissional church the kind of church you dream about, too?

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

In This Edition...

- Cup of Coffee with Pastor Seth
- Youth Update
- Leadership Team
- People to Celebrate
- Celebrate Recovery
- Grief Share
- Worship Update
- Childrens Ministry
- Missions Update
- Congregational Meeting



Sifting Through The Confusion

On May 16th our congregation will vote on two proposed bylaw changes related to voting technology and gender qualification for the Leadership Team. We've already had two informational meetings with further discussion scheduled on April 27th and May 1st, but the first meetings helped our Leadership Team see a need to clarify the gender issue. Two papers were presented, with the first building a case for women in ministry, but we already have women in ministry at I Falls Covenant, so it missed the point. The second argued for the exclusivity of male elders, but we do not have an elder form of governance, so it also missed the point. It took these two misses for our Leadership Team to see with greater clarity, and we eventually defined the real issue: *Will we allow women to serve on the Leadership Team?*

In studying our bylaws and its attached job descriptions, our Leadership Team realized that we are administrators elected to two year terms - not elders - and we all agreed that this needs to be clarified before our May 16th vote. Yes, the bylaw states that a Leadership Team member should meet "standards of character and giftedness for Elders according to 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and Titus 1.6-7," which could be cause for confusion. We affirm the elder standard for all those doing ministry in the church, including the Leadership Team, but that does not make us elders. Women on the Leadership Team does not challenge the New Testament elder model because an Elder Board is not the governance our congregation has chosen.

In the Covenant denomination three constitution models are permissible, consisting of either the Board, the Council, or the Team/Leadership model. Church Boards are unwieldy because they are comprised of Trustees, Deacons, and Christian Education who come together to form a very large Board, making it difficult to get things done. Councils are frustrating because even though they are a smaller group, they bring administrators and ministry people around the same table despite their differing spiritual gifts and different priorities. The Team/Leadership model separates these differences into the Leadership Team and Ministry Leaders, allowing each group to do what they do best in a coordinated fashion. This dynamic form of governance is what we have at I Falls Covenant, and after years of dormancy, it's finally being implemented.

Although these governance models differ, they all share what is called "congregational polity." This means that the ultimate authority within the church belongs to the members, who elect a Leadership Team to make certain decisions between congregational meetings. Elder Boards do not follow a congregational polity and are not found in Covenant churches.

One implication of this is that those who are elected to the Leadership Team do not carry more voting weight than any other member. We represent the congregation in the "in-between" time as mentioned above, but we do not need to disclose our personal vote or tell others how they should vote. When it comes to issues like the proposed bylaw changes, our most important role is to define a healthy and fair process, and allow the membership to prayerfully make its decision. This is congregational polity at its best.

Alan Johnson, Chair



I Falls Covenant Congregational Meeting

On Sunday, May 16 at 11:45am, following the worship service, we will once again meet to vote on the proposed changes & the boiler replacement.



Wednesday Children's Program

Covenant Kids has come to an end for this school year. This program was not only home-based but family-based. On Wednesday evenings families stopped by the church to pick up take-home meals and at-home activity kits between 5-5:45pm. Once home, families ate their meal together. Then at 6pm, a weekly video filled with music, Bible stories, and more was posted to our website, Covenant Kids Facebook group, and YouTube channel. Finally, families were invited to open their at-home activity kits for crafts, games, and more optional fun activities to do together with each other. These activities could be done in one evening, saved for another evening, or broken up over the week!

The Covenant Kids program had 26 families participate, supplied 58 kids with crafts and activities, and fed about 108 people each week.

Special thanks to Karen Layman for planning and cooking the meals and Penny Zoupas for assisting; Tucky Dill for washing the dishes; Kristy Hufnagle and Gary Anderson for handing out the meals; Lynn Peterson for making the at-home kits and Jan Steiner for helping Lynn; Stacy Hall for the video production; and the many individuals who recorded one of the weekly Bible stories for us.

Vacation Bible School

Looking ahead to this summer, Lynn and I would like to offer an in-person Vacation Bible School program. But we will need volunteers! Right now, we are looking for individuals who will help plan and coordinate with us. If God puts this ministry on your heart, please reach out to Lynn Peterson at 324.0508.

Nursery for Sunday Worship

For Easter Sunday, we offered nursery and because of the positive response we received, we would like to continue offering nursery during our Sunday Worship services. Even before the pandemic, finding enough volunteers to keep the volunteer schedule full during the summer months was challenging. If you are interested in serving in this ministry to young families, please contact Joyce Vacura at 324.3157.



Missions Update...

Colleen Estes - Praise for the nurses who had been removed from the reserve, have been returned full time to Pikangikum. Also that young adults have stepped up to receive training as peacekeepers for the community. Pastor Thomas & Pastor Simeon are both back ministering after having health problems that removed them for a time from their ministries. And thank God for no COVID cases in Pikangikum! Pray for Jesselyn and her husband, for overcoming addictions, that Colleen would have her own room in the school for Religious Ed classes, and that more Christian teachers would come to fill vacancies in the school.

Kristen Friesen, missionary in South Asia - Praise that she arrived safely home in South Asia, and is in quarantine and recovering from jet lag.

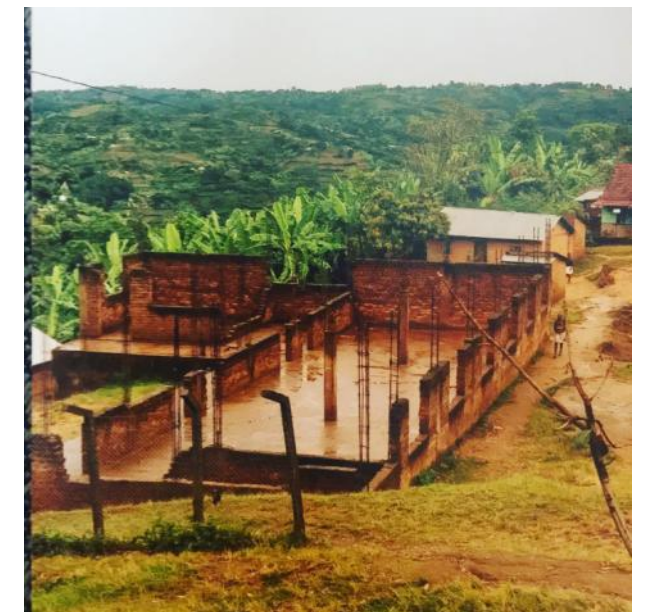
Gene & Inga Whitehead, missionaries in the Arctic region of Sweden - Praise that they were able to meet in person for Easter services. Pray for the remaining weeks for school that their students will be prepared to share Christ when classes end. Pray that their visas would be renewed quickly.

Galen Johnson, former missionary to Congo - Pray for his trip back to Congo. He left April 19, to bring 9 translations of the Jesus Film and 4 translations of the Bible in native languages. Praise that he can see the results of his ministry for 30 years.

Keith and Marty Wardlaw, former missionaries with Ethnos 360 (New Tribes Mission)- Pray for Keith to heal completely from a broken hip.

Megan Herrly- working with students at Timber Bay ministries in Monticello- Praise for a good work weekend April 16, that there was time for spiritual conversation along with the work. Praise that she's so close to being fully-funded. Pray for a house that Timber Bay could buy. Also pray for a place in Monticello for Megan to live, so she doesn't have to drive so far.

Faith Promises Update- God has provided \$80,803 for the missions budget for 2021-2022. This is \$9,393 above the budget from last year! We praise Him for providing "exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think..." (Ephesians 3.20). Many thanks and praise go to each of you who prayed and gave. The missions team is praying and working on where the extra dollars should go. One project that has come to our attention is a chapel that is being built in Uganda by Hands of Action International. They are a group from Bemidji, MN that help kids in eastern Uganda. To check them out, go to handsofactioninternational.org. We are sending \$3000 as a one-time gift to help them complete their chapel. We hope this encourages you to see one place where your Faith Promises are going.



Hands of Action International Chapel

We are beginning to plan for a Short Term Missions trip in 2022. We are excited to see where the Lord may want us to go! If this is something that excites you, please contact Lynn Peterson about helping to plan the trip.