

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER 2025

THE FAMILY MESSENGER

Newsletter of the I Falls Covenant Church

Vacation Bible School & Community Outreach

We had a wonderful group of junior high youth, from Buffalo Covenant Church, who came June 16-20 and blessed our community and church family.

They assisted with projects at Northern Options for Women, Backus Community Center, Servants of Shelter, at individual's homes and lead the VBS program where over 25 kids from the community participated.



This issue:

All Church Retreat 2025

A Cup of Coffee with
Pastor Seth & Kaitlyn

Update from Pastor Marco
& Rachel

Women Growing
Together

Men's Breakfast

Vacation Bible School

Sunday School

Bluewater Update

Fall Schedule



A Cup of Coffee with Pastor Seth & Kaitlyn



Celebrate good times, come on! The biggest joy for us is that in only a few months Kaitlyn and I will be welcoming our first child into our lives. We are so excited and the nursery is finished and ready to welcome our baby girl. We are discovering what many of you already know - children are a blessing from the Lord.

There is another celebration for me as a pastor. August 1, 2025 marked five years as lead pastor of the Evangelical Covenant Church of International Falls. It also is ten years total of serving in the church and living in this community. It really is amazing to think back and reflect on all that God has done in the church and in my life during that time. The church has helped me grow as a pastor, supported my vision of making disciples, and has been there to support me in getting married and starting a family.

A great celebration for all of us is 2026 being the 100 year celebration of our church. What an amazing thing to be a part of! The celebration committee has been hard at work preparing for all of the celebrations that will be happening the weekend of July 31 to August 2. Make sure to mark your calendars for that.

I hope and pray that there are many things you are celebrating in your life. Something we can always celebrate is the work Jesus did in His death and resurrection to save us from sin and give us the gift of eternal life. Remember that every good and perfect gift comes from above. Turn towards heaven and give thanks to God! To God be the glory!

Mercy, peace & love be yours in abundance.

-Pastor Seth & Kaitlyn



Update from Pastor Marco & Rachel

Summers in youth ministry are crazy, and this one has been no exception. We kicked it off by speaking at Bluewater Bible Camp to 7th and 8th graders, at Deeper Life Bible Camp to 9th and 10th graders, and then went back to Bluewater for our church retreat. It was a great chance to connect with youth, meet lots of new faces, and spend time together as a family. Our kids loved camp life and ask us all the time when we're going back.

Our weekly schedule this summer has consisted of packing the free lunches at Backus, Beach Day, Bonfire Bible Study, Ultimate Frisbee, and trying to fit in lunches or hang outs with youth and young adults when we can. We're looking forward to the new routine and schedule that comes with fall. Our two foster girls will be in Head Start four days a week which will give us more opportunity to meet with people, Rachel will hopefully be returning to Young Adults as a weekly attender, and Wednesday night youth group will pick back up. Additionally, I'll be heading up Covenant Kids on Wednesday nights as well.

Not that I speak from want, for I learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in abundance; in any and all things I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4.11-13

We were blessed with a great vacation with Rachel's side of the family where we were able to go to Iceland. God's creation is amazing! Unfortunately, that trip kicked off a rough few weeks where we battled sickness after sickness. Admittedly, we're still trying to find our groove as a family of six, and appreciate the graciousness of everyone in our church family as we're figuring out the best way to balance ministry, foster care, and family life. We appreciate all of the meals and prayers you've blessed us with. It takes a village, and we are so thankful to have one!

Loving life for He is life,
Marco & Rachel

Dear brothers and sisters,
when troubles of any kind
come your way, consider it an
opportunity for great joy. For
you know that when your faith
is tested, your endurance has a
chance to grow. So let it grow,
for when your endurance is
fully developed, you will be
perfect and complete, needing
nothing.

James 1.2-4
(NLT)



All Church Camp 2025



Many from the church family gathered at Bluewater Covenant Bible Camp, July 11-13 in Grand Rapids.

Following chapel on Sunday, July 13, there was a beautiful baptism service at the lake.

Elizabeth Vacura, Greta Bennett and Lucas Hollis were baptized.



BLUEWATER

Isaiah 61: 1-2 says “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn”. The accompanying theme for Bluewater in 2025 was “Real Good News”.

One thing I can say for sure is that God knew exactly what He was doing this summer. The theme verses were lived out in so many ways. The Spirit of the Lord was upon the staff and campers. One staff member knew that a camper was going to be in their cabin since February (and Bluewater doesn't set the cabin lists until the week before each camp is set to begin). When the camp list came out, that camper was in that counselor's cabin. The camper came to camp wanting nothing to do with the parts of camp that were specifically designed to speak Christ into people's lives. They were just there to have fun. But, the Spirit of the Lord was working in the camper also. The camper had many hard questions and through interactions at camp and with the counselor, came to the point of knowing that they needed Christ before anything else. The camper accepted Christ before they left camp.

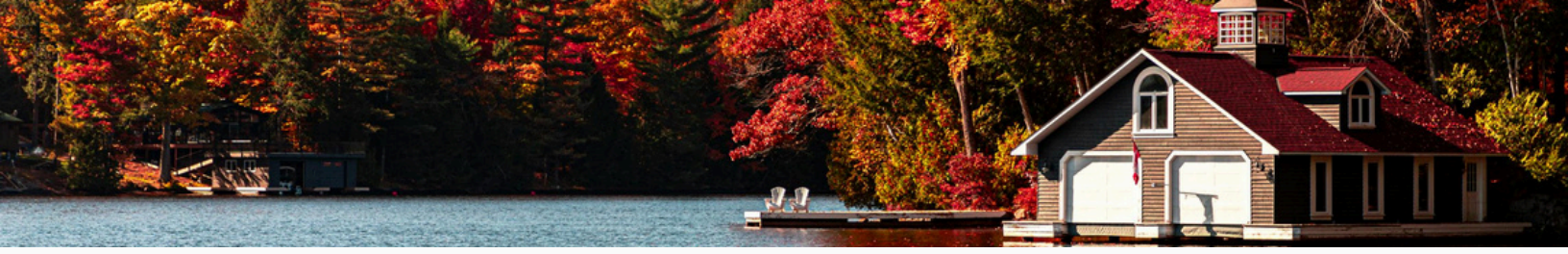
Comfort was brought to those who mourn. A camper whose dad was very sick was placed into the cabin of a counselor whose dad had passed away. The staff member that sets the cabin lists did not know about the camper's situation. But when the staff member was working on the cabin lists, they didn't feel at peace until that counselor was placed with that cabin group.

God provided opportunities to connect people to His work. One staff member got to hear about how a camper they worked with the previous summer had come to know Christ during the school year. Another student, who had made a decision at camp, got to meet a youth pastor in their area that happened to be at camp that week.

Overall, there were 1,260 youth campers, 12 leadership in training youths (3 during the boy's week and 9 during the girl's week), large numbers during family camps, as well as many weekend retreats and groups. This resulted in many opportunities for God's good news to be shared. It also meant needing a larger staff and the accompanying challenges that come with having more people. Despite the staff not being in community as much as some other summers, they still remained mission minded, served well, and cared for the campers.

Please pray:

- For all of the staff and campers from this year as they return to life outside of camp. Pray that they will find ways to commune with God and fellowship with His people.
- Pray that God would continue to guide those He has called to serve at camp and that they would have ears to hear Him and follow where He leads.
- Pray for God's continued direction on how to address the camp grounds to meet the needs of the growing ministry.



Women Growing Together

Women of all ages are invited to come, bring a friend & gather at 6:30pm in the gym for a time of encouragement, sweets, & connection. Questions? Please contact Rachel Griffith.

September 22 – Lori Lyman

October 20 – Pam Edwards

November 24 – Ashley Klingsheim

Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee Members:

Pastor Seth Bjornrud

David Hebig Francine Anderson

Will Davies Kathy Galusha

Lois Lundin Kimberly Dawn Nyborg

Open Positions in 2026:

Leadership Team:

Chair	Personnel Officer
Properties Officer	Financial Officer

Nominating Committee:

2-3 at-large members

The Nominating Committee is looking for recommendations from the congregation for positions for the 2026 Annual Meeting. Please make recommendations on a Covenant Connect card by October 1.



Men's Breakfast

Calling men of all ages – teens to adults – to meet in the gym the first Saturday of the month for breakfast at 8am. Questions? Please contact Pastor Seth.

September 6

October 4

November 1

Sunday School Opportunities

Beginning September 7 at 9:30am:

- Discipleship Pathway - Room 200
- Prayer – Room G101

Beginning September 14 at 9:30am:

- Gospel of John – Room 301
- Confirmation – Room G102
- Teen Girls – Worship Leader's Rm



Upcoming Fall Activities

Teens • September 3 • Our teens will be gathering from 6-8pm in the lower level!

Covenant Kids • Club activities to begin September 10. Free family supper will be served from 5:30-6; club activities will be from 6-7:30pm. This is for kids in K-5th grade.

Waffles & Widows • 10am

- October 11
- November 8
- December 13

Women Growing Together • 6:30pm

- September 22 with Lori Lyman
- October 20 with Pam Edwards
- November 24 with Ashley Klingsheim

Men's Breakfast • 8am

- September 6
- October 4
- November 1

