

April 2020



FIRST COVENANT CHURCH + RED WING, MN

MESSENGER

Doing Life Differently

We are living in very different times right now, aren't we? I was thinking back to all that I was doing in January and February, and how so much has changed so quickly for everyone! But let me just say that I am so proud of our Church community!

This Church cares about one another so much! I can't tell you how many times people have asked us if there is anyone who needs help with finances, getting groceries, etc. I hear stories of people checking in on their neighbors, calling our older and more secluded congregants to remind them they are loved, and so on! When you read through the end of Acts 2 and 4, this was very much what the early Church looked like. They were so united to one another that they went to great lengths to make sure no one was in need... and I see our people living that out during this difficult time for many as well! Well done, Church!

I thought I would take a second to fill you in on all the changes that have been happening here at First Covenant to continue the ministry Christ has called us to, even during a pandemic.

- Livestream Worship Services - Many of you joined us virtually for our first ever livestream of our worship service. We hosted a simplified version of our service with both hymns and contemporary music to sing along with from the safety of your own homes. We continue to make tweaks to help us gather around worshiping our Savior and digging into God's word for hope and nourishment. To find instructions on how to setup your device to watch next Sunday's livestream or to view previous livestreams, go to our website at www.redwingfirstcov.org/livestream
- Kid's Discovery Hour Lessons - Sarah has been working hard in our church office to help continue the providing ministry opportunities for families to utilize at home. Each week, parents should be receiving an email with links to a lesson for kids to watch along with PDFs of discussion questions you can download to process the video with your kids. Check your email and let us know if you are needing access to this wonderful blessing during this time.
- Youth Lessons and Connections - We have launched a few virtual ways for students to continue to grow in their faith during these next several weeks through a few pre-recorded videos. Every Wednesday at 6pm, a video will go out with a short devo message to our students. One Thursdays at Noon, our Confirmation students will receive their weekly lesson and a short online form/project to complete. And then on Fridays at Noon a testimony interview with one of our youth will be sent out as an effort to learn each other's stories and hear about what's going on in their world these days.

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Doing Life Differently (cont.)

- Starting a Young Adult Meeting - We are also in the midst of launching a new Young Adult Virtual Gathering through a Zoom video call. With all of our college-age students being back home and stuck in a new norm, we decided to gather virtually for connection, God's word, and prayer every Sunday at 7:30pm. If you know any young adults who would like to join, let me know!
- Zoom Meetings - We are also utilizing the Zoom technology to host our virtual meetings for council, pastoral search team, and even membership class to keep our community efforts moving forward.
- Care Team Stepping Up - Our Care Team has put together a more intentional process to check-in regularly with those from our congregation who are homebound (for health/medical reasons), hospitalized, or living alone. We are also mailing them bulletins, newsletters, and anything else that might be informative for them. We currently have 52 people on our list that we are connecting with. If you know of someone in our congregation who isn't getting connected with, let us know!

Obviously living virtually isn't ideal, especially since we are relational beings. But this has forced us to get creative until we can be together in person once again! As I close, I would also like to recommend two resources as we continue to live virtually these next several weeks.

- Breeze Online Giving - While events and programming may be shutting down these next few weeks, the mission of FCC continues to move forward! We are working hard to provide care, share resources, and proclaim the hope found in Jesus Christ! Please consider giving your offerings online by going to www.redwingfirstcov.org/give or through your own breeze account.
- Right Now Media - If you are getting sick of Netflix, did you know that you can have a FREE account with Right Now Media through our Church? Think of Right Now Media as a great faith-based alternative to Netflix where you can watch all sorts of bible studies, book discussions, seminars, and even kid shows that you can stream through your device or TV! If you don't have an account or need to

Offering Updates

2020 Budget: \$471,238 (\$9,062/week needed)

12 weeks 2020 - \$111,799 (+2.8%)

12 weeks 2019 - \$101,453

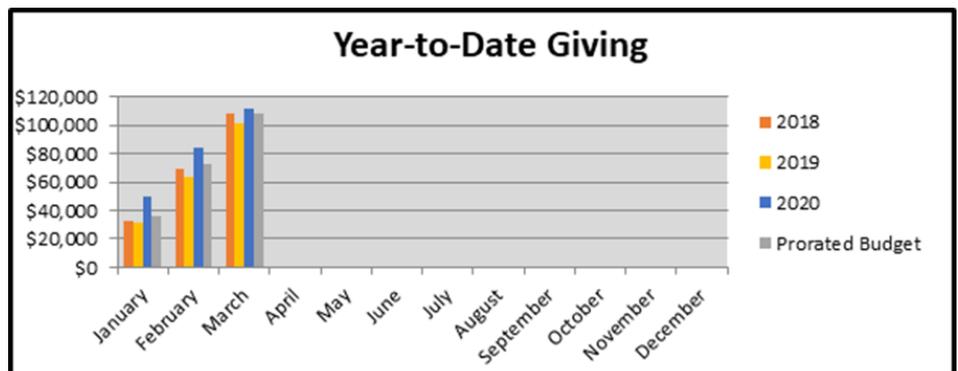
12 weeks 2018 - \$108,840

March Comparison:

4 weeks 2020 - \$27,230

4 weeks 2019 - \$37,804

4 weeks 2018 - \$39,071



From Your Church Council

In light of the current COVID-19 crisis, the council at its March 23rd meeting moved to extend Pastor Marc's time with us. He will remain at First Covenant until sometime in May. During this extended time, he will split his time between the church and Portage Lake Bible camp. Pastor Ken Larson has agreed to a delayed start date for his interim ministry with us. We are grateful for the flexibility on the part of all involved. This most uncommon virus situation presents us with many challenges, and we pray that with God's guidance we are finding the best path of ministry for all.

Roger Johnson
Church chairman

Pastoral Search Committee

These are the members of our Pastoral Search Committee: Jim Larson – Chair, Susan Goetz – Vice Chair, Jim Maybach – Secretary, Rebecca Beaulieu – Communications, Amy VanLoon, Brian Malyon, Brad Goudy, Char Hayes, Judy Wachholz, Don Overlander – Alternate

The Pastoral Search Process

A Pastoral Search Committee's task is to prayerfully identify and recommend a candidate to the congregation for approval. Some churches find that the search process takes about 6-18 months. Others take longer and yet others shorter. The congregation will receive regular updates as we move through the process. Each member of the committee requests your support in prayer as we walk through this process together. Below are several phases to the call process.

Organization Phase – Committee is organized, establishes job description and compiles information for candidates.

Information Gathering Phase – Receive names and profiles of candidates

Contact Phase – Contact potential candidates; identify a candidate to recommend to the congregation for approval.

Candidating Phase – Clarify terms of call with the candidate and communicate this to the congregation; prepare candidate and congregation to discern God's call.

Call Phase – Pastoral candidate and congregation answer the question, "Is God calling us together?"

Commitment Phase – Both congregation and pastor say "yes" to the call.

Ministry Phase – Pastor is installed and pastoral relations committee begins regular meetings with the pastor.

In early April, our church profile will be posted on a Covenant website providing information to potential candidates for the lead pastor position. The committee will then be sent potential candidates which match the criteria our church has provided from our self-review. At this point, the real mission of the committee begins. We will review applications, listen to recorded sermons and conduct phone interviews. This is all done with the goal of finding one candidate to recommend to the congregation for our next lead pastor.

Please continue your fervent prayer for guidance and wisdom in the search process. We know that God is going before us in preparing the way and ultimately bringing HIS choice to lead our body of believers.

From the Church Chair

This past week I took a break from all the COVID-19 emails to catch up on some other reading, since there are not a lot of places to go or activities to attend. I was reading an article in which Cortney Adams, the pastor of the Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal church in Greenville South Carolina, was quoted. In His sermon he preached about worship. He said, *"Did you wake up this morning with Jesus on your mind?"* The people said, "Amen." He continued *"Did you wake up and say, 'Thank You, Jesus?' We come here because we love a God who is worthy of worship. I don't worry about what is going on in the White House if I come into the house of God. I don't got to worry. I got to worship."*

It seems almost impossible to escape from what is going on in the places of power and decision making whether it is on the city, county, state or national level. News conferences abound with the latest numbers and strategies for this crisis. What caught my attention in Pastor Adams' sermon was this, Where am I looking for my help? Where am I looking for hope? His words brought to mind Psalm 121 which says, "Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made the heavens and the earth!" Rev Adams got it right, did I wake up this morning with Jesus on my mind? Or was my first thought about the latest press release? It my hope and prayer for all of us during this most unusual crisis situation that our first thought is about the one true God, our creator and redeemer. It is from Him that our help comes from.

I want to thank Pastor Marc and Pastor Mike for all the have done to creatively continue ministry at First Covenant Church. Job well done to both of you. You are helping us to wake up with Jesus on our minds. To each one of the FCC family, be safe and stay well. Wake up with Jesus on your mind, each day.

Roger Johnson
Church chairman

MOPS & MOMSnext

We will be hosting live meetings via ZOOM while we are at home. Check your email or check with your discussion group leader.

During this time of social distancing and staying home, we encourage you to find ways to connect with family and friends. The tried and true ways of postal mail and phone calls, as well as email and text work well. Perhaps you might try ZOOM or Marco Polo, FaceTime, or Skype to see friendly faces.

Your time with kids might benefit from a change...check coolprogeny.com/2020 to find out when authors are reading their books online. Perhaps your family would enjoy a dance party, reading with a flashlight under a blanket, playing games, coloring pictures for Grandma and Grandpa, or helping you bake.

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31



What You Need to Know about the Secure Act

Congress just passed the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act late in December, significantly changing the rules for Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs).

Among the changes in the bill is an increase in the IRA Required Minimum Distribution Age. Under the old rules, an owner of an IRA was required to begin taking distributions upon reaching the age of 70-1/2. The SECURE Act pushes the age out to 72. If you did not turn 70-1/2 by the end of 2019, you are not required to take a minimum distribution until the age of 72. If you turned 70-1/2 in 2019, you are under the old rules and need to begin taking your required minimum distribution.

Something to note: even if you are not taking required minimum distributions until you reach age 72, you can still make qualified charitable distributions from your IRA upon reaching the age of 70-1/2.

Also in the act is a provision that changes the “stretch” IRA rules. This change does not affect spouses; spouses named as beneficiaries continue to have the option of treating the inherited IRA as their own. Prior to this year, for the most part, an individual beneficiary inheriting an IRA from the deceased IRA owner could take distributions over their lifetime, thus stretching out the distribution timeline and accompanying tax burden. This will no longer be the case. Under the SECURE Act, non-spouse beneficiaries, with a few specific exceptions, will need to completely distribute the IRA within 10 years.

In addition to the surviving spouse, exceptions to the 10-year timeframe for distribution include minor children of the IRA owner (until they hit the age of majority), the chronically ill, the disabled, and those no more than ten years younger than the decedent.

Given these changes to the law, it will be very important to review your IRA beneficiary designations. It could be beneficial to think about naming charities as beneficiaries of your IRA, or a portion of the IRA, and leaving other assets to your family. If a trust is the beneficiary of your IRA, it will be very important to review the language in your trust addressing IRA distributions. Many individuals created “see-through” trusts to receive IRA distributions over a beneficiary’s lifetime; these trust provisions may need to be reviewed and reworked due to the new rules. There are still good reasons to have trusts as IRA beneficiaries. You will want to understand the tax implications of doing so.

Yes, the IRA rules just got a bit more complicated. Please know that this is not something you have to figure out alone. Your accountant, your estate planning attorney, and your Covenant Trust financial services representative are ready to join you in figuring out what is best for your specific situation. Please give me a call.

Covenant Trust,
Karlene Crabtree
847-583-3277

Building & Grounds

Hard to believe spring is upon us. Its that time of year that we all need to clean up from the winter, and the church is no different. I have projects both inside the building and out that I could use some help with. Also I'm putting together the mowing schedule. If you can help with any of these projects, please let me know!

TimSchmidt
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Cell/Text 262-893-3994

Remembering Our Birthday Friends with Prayer

2nd	Bruce Schulthess, Morley Struss	17th	Marc Eix, Perry Eisert, Shelly Struss
4th	Dennis Roskam	18th	Al Nelson, Angela Frechette, Deanna Westin, Eva Mandelkow
5th	Anna Deppe	19th	Al Wulff ,Murt Aukema
6th	Arlen Westin, Becky Larson, Nathaniel Beaulieu	20th	Debbie Ahmed
8th	Eunice Leander	22nd	Alex Ryan
9th	Jacob Chapin	23rd	Heidi Chapin
11th	Maggie Keehn	24th	Charlotte Watzl, Elisabeth Gadiant
13th	Abby Tesdall, Gary Thomas	25th	Marian Tesdall
14th	Marcia Jensen	26th	Brian Malyon
15th	Kris Johnson	27th	Tyler Hanson
16th	Ryan Allen	30th	Judy Wachholz , Rebecca Alpers

Prayer is a vital part of the life of our church. In order to help us focus on praying for one another, please use our list of birthday friends in each month's Messenger to pray for them and their families. There will be enough names to pray for someone throughout the month. Let's make praying for one another a means of encouragement to us all!



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