

April 2021



FIRST COVENANT CHURCH + RED WING, MN

MESSENGER

From Pastor Jim Murphy

Happy Easter

Hi everyone! Happy Easter! And yes, as a pastor, I say “Happy **Easter**” with boldness and joy because we get the Christian use of the word “Easter” from Matthew 28:1.

*After the Sabbath, at **dawn** on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

Some people claim that Easter is a pagan holiday and, therefore, Christians should not use the word “Easter.” However, while there have always been pagan celebrations of the spring equinox and new life during the spring months, our Christian use of the word for celebrating the resurrection of Christ comes directly from the Old High German word “eostarum” which translates the Greek word “epiphōskō” as our English word “dawn.” This was the very moment the women discovered the tomb was empty and marked the day we’ve been celebrating for almost two thousand years! So, Happy Easter!

Calls to Action

There are two phrases you’ll begin to hear us say on Sunday mornings and in our publications quite often as time goes on. These two phrases are simple calls to action we’ll be sharing with everyone who attends First Covenant on Sundays, whether onsite or online.

1. **Join a Group** We encourage everyone to join a group of some sort to find friendships and grow in their faith. This could be a Life Group, a Bible Study, or an interest group. Our faith grows best in the context of relationships. We all need to be part of a smaller community within the larger church. You can meet onsite, in homes, or online. You can meet weekly, monthly, or however often that best works for you. Of course, we do, however, encourage you all to remain vigilant with covid-awareness and safe practices during the pandemic. Stay safe! But stay connected and join a group!
2. **Join a Team** We also encourage everyone to join a team to serve others. Each of us gifted with talents, abilities, and passions that benefit one another. Whether it’s greeting people at the door or in the parking lot, leading a group, teaching a study, serving kids or student ministries, helping in the office, painting a wall, shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, playing music, reading scripture, operating the soundboard, supporting the live stream, or calling to visit people who are isolated at home. There are many opportunities to exercise our gifts and passions and God designed us to experience joy when we put them to work and serve others. By serving others we find our God-given purpose. So step out and join a team!

Mission Awareness of the Month - Alaska Ministries

Alaska Christian College (ACC): In 1999, the Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska began a pilot project called "Alaska Leadership College," starting with 5 students. This pilot project became the foundation for the Mission of Alaska Christian College, "To prepare young people for whole-life discipleship," and for the core values of ACC: Learning, Building, and Serving. Although ACC recruits a diverse student body, it's focus is on indigenous populations. The mission of ACC is to empower Alaska Natives through biblically-based education and Christian formation to pursue excellence in character, learning, and service as followers of Christ. Alaska Christian College continues to be a place where the Word of God is communicated, students are educated according to their cultural setting, healing and restoration takes place, and students find hope in returning to serve in their villages and communities.

We have had the privilege of supporting Alaska Christian College for quite a few years. Al and Judy Nelson, members of our congregation who live in Soldotna, Alaska, have been involved at the college and, although retired, Judy still tutors there. For years, Glen Mehrkens has led summer teams of volunteers, including members of our congregation, to complete building projects at the college, and a team will be going from our community this year, as well. In a recent conversation with Keith Hamilton, President of ACC, he thanks us for our support and he provided these prayer requests: 1) that the students will be able to persevere and endure to the end of the school year (3 weeks away), 2) for the 310 volunteers coming this summer, that they will have the right skills and funds to get through the myriad of projects, and 3) for a new Director of Enrollment and Director of Student Life. These positions are critical to the college's student needs.

KICY: KICY broadcasts from Nome, Alaska and is affiliated with the Evangelical Covenant Church. KICY serves native Alaskan villages throughout the Seward Peninsula, Yukon & Kuskokwim Deeltas and the Russian regions of Chukotka, Kamchatka and Siberia. Since they first signed on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1960, KICY has continued to broadcast the good news of Jesus Christ throughout Western Alaska and the Russian Far East. They have the opportunity to send the gospel into some places where other forms of media are not readily available. Most of their annual operating budget comes from churches and individual donations. The staff is comprised of full-time and part-time volunteers.

Please keep Alaska Ministries in your prayers throughout the Month of April.

Library Corner

We would like to again encourage you to use our church Library. Many are checking books out and doing some reading during this time of in-activity. Keep up the good work. Feel free to come in and browse during the week if you are not attending in person on Sundays. We have made room in the fiction side of the library (left side) to expand to the lower, longer bookcase that you see when you enter. Also Young readers are on the lower right side of that shelf. We are always adding to the free rack, which includes all topics and those are FREE, so please do not return them to us. Enjoy reading!

Note of Thanks

Thank you for all the diapers and wipes donated to us here at First Choice from your church's diaper drive! We are so grateful and so are our families! A dry baby is happy baby! A happy baby makes for a happy mom! A happy mom is a good mom! The blessings are many! Your friends at First Choice Clinic

NWC Women Ministries Offering Bible Studies Online

Looking for a Bible Study opportunity? Women Ministries of the Northwest Conference is offering five Bibles studies weekly for six to seven weeks. You can pick your best time option. Registration is free.

Monday evenings | Starting April 5 | 7:00-8:00 p.m. | Moderator: Rachel Kleinschmidt

Sensible Shoes: A Story About the Spiritual Journey (book \$4-12)

Learn about discipleship and ways that we as women can disciple other women in our churches and communities. We will discuss ways to implement discipleship in our own women ministries groups, talk about wins and challenges in our ministries, and disciple each other through the spiritual practices learned in the book *Sensible Shoes* by Sharon Garlough Brown. There is no cost for the cohort, material needed is the book *Sensible Shoes*, which can be purchased online through any bookseller.

Tuesday evenings | Starting April 6 | 7:00-8:00 p.m. | Moderator: Sheryl Schanil

Colossians (no cost for book)

The ESV Study Bible describes the book of Colossians as “one of the most thoroughly Christ-centered books in the Bible.” This study will delve into six key themes found in Colossians including who Christ is, what He has done and what that means for us as believers. It is full of practical ways to grow more in love with Christ and live out our Christian lives. Our time together will open with a Spiritual practice to focus on Christ and end with a time to pray for one another.

Wednesdays | Starting April 7 | 10:00-11:00 a.m. or 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Moderator: Deb Devine

The Virtuous Woman In Ruth (book \$8-10)

Do you want to discover what God desires every woman to know? This first book in the “Complete in Christ” series explores the connection between the Virtuous Woman described in Proverbs 31 and the Book of Ruth. “The Virtuous Woman in Ruth” is a short Bible study that allows today’s busy woman to quickly recognize what it means to be virtuous and why this is so important for God’s esteemed daughters to understand. Join us for this study and start on a journey toward a better understanding of the Bible and a healthy, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ!

Thursday evenings | Starting April 8 | 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Moderator: Stacy Hall

What Matters Most (book \$15.99)

The world has always been full of trials, disappointments, temptations, fractured friendships, and financial hardships. Yet Paul’s letter to the Philippians claims we can discover contentment and joy in the midst of it all by prioritizing what matters most—Christ. Over 7 sessions, study the ever-relevant Letter of Philippians to deepen your relationship with Jesus, turn your worries into worship, and develop gospel-centered tools for navigating relational conflict.

Thursday evenings | Starting April 8 | 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Moderator: Kristi Lindstrom

Thirsty? A Study in Biblical Waters (no cost for book)

Water is essential for human life. It is necessary for our bodies to function properly, and ignoring the signs of dehydration can have detrimental effects. We will look at Scripture that addresses the waters of forgiveness, water for the forsaken, waters flow, water for filling, water fountains, and water for flourishing.

Register at wmnwc.org under HOME | Upcoming Events | Renewal Cohorts

Registration ENDS SOON. Don't Delay!



Covenant Trust - Should Children Be Kept in the Loop?

During estate or financial planning, the topic often comes up regarding how much to involve children. The question, "Should I share this information with my children?" is an important matter to consider and discuss. There is perhaps no better time to address this than during times of short and/or long-range financial planning. This is when it is most fresh and pertinent in your mind.

How this is handled is different for each family. You are the best one to make this call because of the unique relationship you have with your child(ren). You probably have a good understanding of each of their strengths and weaknesses. You are most familiar with how your children interact with each other and are aware of other dynamics impacting how they may or may not get along. Often during times of health crises or the death of a parent, differences among children are more strongly expressed. For example, if one or both parents' care requires moving them to an assisted living facility, what to do with the existing home can become a tense issue. If children are spread out geographically, these conversations can become even more complicated.

As much as is possible, we have found it helpful to have the child(ren) informed regarding their parents' estate and financial planning decisions and directives. Being proactive and intentional about communicating your wishes and desires to them and sharing relevant information about your plan not only helps them to be as prepared as possible should you need their help in the future, it can also help reduce misunderstanding and potential conflict in a stressful time.

We encourage arranging family meetings from time to time to share and/or update parents' wishes for both the present and future. This can help avoid speculation later, especially when emotions may be running ahead of the facts. In an ideal world, this all sounds good, however, there are situations where it is best not to share too much if any information with children. It bears repeating, we believe these decisions ultimately belong to you.

This article is brought to you by the local Financial Services Representative, Karen Crabtree 847.583.3277

From the Financial Secretary

2021 Budget: (\$9,417/week needed)

13 weeks 2021 - \$105,460 (-13.9% under budget)

13 weeks 2020 - \$125,828

13 weeks 2019 - \$110,295

March Comparison:

4 weeks 2021 - \$24,713

5 weeks 2020 - \$41,260

5 weeks 2019 - \$46,646

MN Teen Challenge: \$3,305 | **Red Wing Food Shelf:** \$700





April

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Easter Sunday 8:30am Worship 10:30am Worship				1 Maundy Thursday 9:30am Men's Bible Study 5:00pm Worship Team Practice	2 Good Friday 5:30pm Good Friday Worship	3
5 8:30am Blended Worship 9:40am Kid's Discovery Hour 10:30am Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Youth Group		6 9:30am Women's Study 10:00am Staff Meeting	7 8:30am CDEAP 6:30pm Confirmation Class	8 9:30am Men's Bible Study 5:00pm Worship Team Practice	9	10
11 Holy Communion 8:30am Blended Worship 9:40am Kid's Discovery Hour 10:30am Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Youth Group		13 9:30am Women's Study 10:00am Staff Meeting	14 8:30am CDEAP 9:00am MOPS & MOMSnext	15 9:30am Men's Bible Study 5:00pm Worship Team Practice	16	17
18 Mission Sunday 8:30am Blended Worship 9:40am Kid's Discovery Hour 10:30am Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Youth Group		20 9:30am Women's Study 10:00am Staff Meeting	21 8:30am CDEAP	22 9:30am Men's Bible Study 5:00pm Worship Team Practice	23	24
25 8:30am Blended Worship 9:40am Kid's Discovery Hour 10:30am Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Youth Group	26 Newsletter articles due 6:30pm Council Meeting	27 9:30am Women's Study 10:00am Staff Meeting	28 8:30am CDEAP	29 9:30am Men's Bible Study 5:00pm Worship Team Practice	30	

Remembering Our Birthday Friends with Prayer

2nd	Bruce Schulthess, Morley Struss	18th	Al Nelson, Angela Frechette, Deanna Westin, Eva Mandelkow
4th	Dennis Roskam	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
17th	Richard Paton, Perry Eisert, Shelly Struss Bennett Thomas		

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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