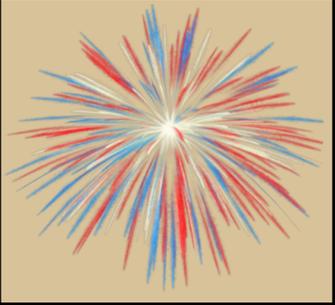


July 2020



FIRST COVENANT CHURCH • RED WING, MN

MESSENGER

Hello Red Wing!

I'm glad to be here! Ever since First Covenant asked me to take on the role of Interim Lead Pastor in February, I've been wondering what it would be like. This was true on several levels. First, I asked myself how it would be to resume a pastoral role after three years of retirement – which I thoroughly enjoyed. It's been nice to get up on Sunday morning and go to church just to worship and listen to the message. At the time I retired I was gladly anticipating having no organizational or programmatic responsibilities; I was ready for a time away from the regular schedule of worship and preaching, teaching and leading. On another level I questioned if my pastoral instincts and skills would kick back in or if there would be re-learning curve to pick it up again. Thirdly, if I did an interim ministry, I wondered what the church, the people and the staff would be like. And then came Covid 19! Now I was going to re-engage in ministry in an atmosphere that no one had operated in.

I've been here a little more than a week, and while I don't have an definitive answers to those questions, I can say that I'm pleased to be here. Mike, Sarah and Darold have graciously welcomed me and are doing a great job of orienting me to life at First Covenant. The people I've met so far have been very friendly, and I've enjoyed hearing their stories. As to whether or not my instincts and skills have been rejuvenated, you'll have to be the judge of that. And starting in the "age of Covid" has made me take a hard look at how I can best be helpful here.

I first heard the call of God to enter ministry at the end of my freshman year in college. That was 50 years ago – I can hardly believe it! At the time our country was in an uproar over the Vietnam war and the civil rights movement, and many wondered how we'd make it through the turmoil. It feels eerily similar today. Yet I can say that in every place I've been and every situation I've faced, the Lord has been faithful to his church and enabled his people to carry on and expand the work of his Kingdom. The same is true today. So while we have lots of questions and few answers, we know that nothing can separate us from his love (Romans 8.38-39) and his Spirit still empowers his people to share and embody the good news. I'm very glad to join you in this ongoing call to each one of us and I'm expectant that the Lord has good things in store!

Pastor Ken

Lessons From the Pandemic

When the pandemic arrived and changed our daily life I lost my daily workouts at the Y. I had to find a new way to get regular exercise. Cycling in March was not an option, so I started to walk each morning. I planned a 5+ mile circle route and started to walk. During my daily walks I have discovered many things. Let me share two of these pandemic lessons with you.

Just recently as I walked down Tyler Road I noticed a beautiful purple flower. I was stunned by its color. I saw one then another and another. I enjoyed each one I saw. I wondered what it was. At first because of all the other vegetation growing around it I missed seeing its stem. When I finally did, I realized this purple flower was the top of a large thistle plant. It got me to thinking about sin in our lives. It can look beautiful, pleasant, and be enjoyed. Once found out to be sin however, like the thistle, it is not so easily gotten rid of because its many many thorns that will not allow you to just grab it and remove it root and all. To do so would be painful to say the least. Often times we don't deal with our sin because we don't recognize it as sin and when we do it will be painful to remove it from our life.

A second lesson from my pandemic walks is this. It makes a difference which way the light is coming from. Monday through Saturday I walk down Tyler Road heading east toward Bench Street. But on Sunday I walk west down the hill and return home going up the hill from Bench Street. I do this as a physical reminder that Sunday is the sabbath day, a different day when normal routine takes a rest and my focus is purposely placed on God. So, what I discovered is that I see things differently when I go the opposite direction. Things I never see Monday through Saturday jump out on Sunday. I have also discovered how much easier it is to see things when the light of the rising sun is behind you illuminating your path ahead rather than when I walk into the sun and have to shield my eyes. How true that is spiritually as well. When we let God illumine our path, we will see much more in the world through which we are walking. When we walk purposing to focus on God, we see the world differently. Monday through Saturday I think I know the world pretty well through which I am walking. Then Sunday comes and discover there is so much I don't know and haven't seen clearly at all. I really need God's help to see the world around me clearly. Another pandemic lesson I have experienced.

How about you, what lessons have you learned from the pandemic? The pandemic is not over and may in fact go on for quite some time. We will try to move forward with care and caution. And as we do, I'm sure there will be stops and starts, and twists and turns. Be that as it may, don't forget to learn the lessons God has for you along the way.

Roger Johnson, Church Chair

American Red Cross Blood Drive

First Covenant Church is hosting American Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, July 22 from noon to 6:00 p.m. To schedule a time to give blood you can access the scheduling account at www.redcrossblood.org/account-login. Starting on June 15, the American Red Cross began testing all blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. Donors can expect results of the antibody test within 7 –10 days of donation. A successful donation must be received to get results. Due to the anticipated high demand, appointments are highly encouraged. (call the church to set up an appointment, too.)



Vacation Bible School — Camp In a Box

VBS & Lake Beauty Bible Camp Ministries Are Partnering to Bring You Camp-In-A-Box!

These ministries are partnering to pay **50%** of each Camp-in-a-Box!

Camp boxes are designed for ages 5-12 and are intended to be ordered as **1 box per child.**

Boxes will be shipped to your home.

Initial orders will be sent on July 6th, but Lake Beauty will continue to supply camp boxes throughout the summer.

When ordering just mention that you are from Red Wing First Covenant and share this code: **VBSLBBC20.** (Lake Beauty office: 320-732-3218)



A CAMP EXPERIENCE IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD!



Order the Box

Call the office at 320.732.3218.



Get the Box

Your box will ship on July 6th, so expect it to arrive within a week.



Summer Camp!

Get access to what you need to have Lake Beauty in your home!

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Geared for Ages 5-12
- 5 Days of Summer Camp Content
- Daily Messages from our Summer Camp Speakers
- Access to Online Teaching, Songs, Skits, and More
- Craft Ideas and Video Instructions
- Activities and Games to do at Home
- Our 2020 Summer Theme Shirt



(SUGGESTED DONATION: \$49)

Congregational Care

It was a delight to see so many of you at the Eix Drive-Bye. Marc and Sarah were grateful to be able to see so many of you to say "thank you" and good-bye. To those of you who had made special appointments to spend time with the family one-on-one, we are sorry for the wait in the hot parking lot, but so glad that you were able to send them off with the gift of loving words.

Janis Kimball has been heroic in rounding up quilt squares for the signature quilt for the Eix from First Covenant. When you see her be sure and thank her for the idea and implementing it. Now all she has to do is Sew, Sew, Sew!!

It has been good to know that so many of you are keeping in touch with phone calls. Co-vid will be with us for a while more so patience and phone calls are a good way to care for each other.

Char Hayes, Congregational Care

Library Corner

We are open, and we welcome you to come and check out a book that interests you. We have been working in the Library to catalog new books as well as donated books. Also, some housekeeping in bringing our books up to date, and remove some that no one has been interested in. These will go on the Free Rack, which you then can take and keep or pass around to others, just don't return them to the Library. Fiction still seems to be a popular read, also some self-help books that may interest some of you, as well as some Biography's. Come & browse and hopefully you can find something that you can take home and read.

Worship & Music

Attention Singers! Do you like to sing traditional hymns? Do you like to sing Contemporary Christian music? We are looking for people that can help lead the singing during the church service. We could use a family, a married couple, or friends on a rotating basis. Contact Candace Bean (beanwc1245@gmail.com) or Anna Bechtold (annaB2009@hotmail.com) for more details.

Upcoming Youth Events

Bonfire @ the Bechtolds (Wednesdays, 7-8pm)

Students are invited to join us each week at the Bechtolds (931 West Ave in Red Wing) for a bonfire. There will be snacks, yard games, and simply and opportunity to connect with others!

Water Wars Event (July 15, 3-6pm)

Cool down the summer with Water balloon challenges, squirt gun wars, etc. Hosted at the Overlander's House (17026 228th Street Way in Welch)



JULY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00pm Youth Bonfire	2	3	4 Fourth of July
5 HOLY COMMUNION 9:00am In person Worship	6 Mike out of the office 6:00pm Pastoral Search Committee	7	8 7:00pm Youth Bonfire	9	10	11
12 9:00am In person Worship	13	14	15 Sarah out of the office 3:00pm Youth Water Wars	16	17 Sarah out of the office	18
19 9:00am In person Worship	20	21	22 12:00pm Blood Drive 7:00pm Youth Bonfire	23	24	25
26 9:00am In person Worship	27 6:30pm Council Meeting	28	29 7:00pm Youth Bonfire	30	31	

Remembering Our Birthday Friends with Prayer

2nd	Casey Larson	17th	Jillian Lundell
3rd	Derek Alpers	18th	Matt Kline
4th	Linda Anderson, Fred Klenke	19th	Bruce Eckblad, Leah Ryan
6th	Melissa Zenzen	21st	Carole Daggett, Joyce Quade
9th	Mike Bechtold, Maddie Snyder, Terry Yockey	24th	Harland Schultz
10th	Mac Walter	25th	Janine Mason, Becky Van Loon, Shelley Gilbert
12th	Paul Resel	26th	Dori Svihl, Leanne Overlander
13th	Emmy Sherrard	27th	Beth Schulthess
14th	Jim Nelson	28th	Joanie Heineman
15th	Sarah Benidt-Grave, Indeah Yockey	29th	Arlene Freewalt, Angelina Carlisle, Camille Hart, Susan Gronvall

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!

