

Experiencing the Kingdom of God at a Church Picnic

JUNE 2021



FIRST COVENANT CHURCH + RED WING, MN

MESSENGER

I don't know if it was common in Jesus' time for thousands of people to gather on a hillside to share a meal together, but the Gospels tell us it happened at least twice. The Gospels also tell us that Jesus instructed the disciples to have the people sit down, using a word that indicates people should recline, as if at a banquet. We also read that after the meal, those thousands were satisfied. These were not grab-and-go lunches

Imagine Jesus' perspective as he looked out over the scene. His disciples were working their way through the thousands, instructing people to get seated for a banquet and then to receive. Imagine Jesus's heart, as he watched the people break the bread and consume the nourishment he had provided. Imagine Jesus' heart as the sights and sounds of that hillside transition from hunger and struggle to relaxed satisfaction.

We also have another glimpse of Jesus' heart on that afternoon. Prior to the story of one of these hillside meals, the Gospels tell us of Jesus receiving the news that his beloved cousin, John the Baptist, had been murdered on a whim.

And yet, Jesus hosted a banquet. A banquet that both momentarily satisfied and also overflowed with the promise of an eternal blessing that we cannot comprehend.

Several years ago, I found myself attending a church picnic during a season of profound loss. But at that picnic, I experienced a taste of God's Kingdom.

As the meal progressed, I was seriously longing for some dessert. However, I was sitting on the backside of a full table, feeding two young kids whom I had finally corralled long enough to feed. And just when I'd given up on the idea of having dessert, along comes Sandi Nelson dishing out pieces of apple pie. The pie tasted amazing, but even greater was receiving the joy and generosity of Sandi's heart in that moment.

Then later, well after dark, we all climbed on a horse drawn wagon for a hayride. The stars were displaying their full glory, accompanied by a soundtrack of horses hooves and wagon wheels crunching through the soybean stubble, harmonizing beautifully with the squeaky clanking of the harnesses and wagon hitch. As we were marveling at the starry sky above us, Jodie Alpers explained that it was possible to see satellites moving across the sky. I had no idea.

But as I looked up, following her instructions, I still vividly recall seeing my first satellite moving through that glorious night sky. My heart and mind were overwhelmingly satisfied in that moment, tasting the clear promise of what will someday be forever.

None of us need reminders that we're living in a world that is far from what God intended. But we desperately hunger for reminders that Jesus invites us to experience, and participate in, His present, and coming, glorious Kingdom.

Todd Mehrkens
Vice-chairman

Chairman's Corner

Welcome to fall! Yes, I know it's the end of May. Today I got pictures of my granddaughter's graduation, from preschool. Next year it's on to prekindergarten. How fast they grow up. We are experiencing confirmations and graduations and Memorial Day which signals the beginning of summer.

But I would like to welcome you to fall. As we come out of the season of pandemic, our pastors and the council are actively looking at our fall. We are hopeful that our congregational life and ministry will again be active. There are many things that we have missed and look forward to experiencing again. So, I want to invite you to spend some time during those pleasant summer days to think about where you might fit into the fall activities. Your help may be needed in Discovery Hour, or in Awana, or as a part of the worship ministry. Maybe a small group or ministry team is where God wants you this fall. After Labor Day is when fall begins, but during the summer is when GOD invites us to seek his direction, to ask the question, "What would you have me do?" Summer is the season to pray and wait on God, to get ready to follow when fall arrives.

In the midst of the fun of summer take time to think of the fall so that together we might love and serve God with all of our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. Have a great summer.

Roger Johnson
Chairman

Congregational Care

The sun is out, the days are soft with warmth, the flowers are perky and I have a pair of purple finches that have nested in the midst of my leftover Christmas greenery on my deck. The first week in May I cleaned all the planters on the deck and just as I was about to scoop out the left over tree branches in a large planter, I spotted a fresh looking nest and two purple finches in the nearby tree making a small racket. I decided to leave the nest alone to this worried pair of birds and now have a puff of tiny bird lives in the middle of all those dead branches.

A parable?? It felt like it. Covid 19 has cost the world heavily in lives, jobs and hope. Hate aimed at other people has cost us heavily in lives, relationships and homes.

I've heard the question "Where is God?" He is here, present in our lives, doing what he does best, creating goodness out of the brokenness of man, giving hope to the hopeless - creating puffs of life in the midst of dead branches.

For First Covenant our hope is being fleshed out in times together.

June 6 we will celebrate our graduates

June 16 and July 21 we will enjoy a Block Party in our parking lot more information will be coming so watch for it!!

Three Bible studies are up and running and a fourth will start in June - puffs of life.

Blessings,
Char Hayes

Student Ministries June Calendar

Youth Bonfire

June 9 | 6:30-8:30pm | the Masons (3426 Lake Street)

Youth Group is rounding out the year with an End Of The Year Bonfire. Come enjoy S'mores and games as we head into our Summer Events

Junior High Camp

June 13-18 | Lake Beauty Bible Camp.

For students who will be completing 6th-8th grade this year. The theme this year is "Scaling the Summit: Training for the Trek" which allows us to answer the question, "What is my purpose?"

Church Block Party

June 16 | 5:30-7:00pm | First Covenant Church Parking Lot

Join us for a block party filled with food, games, and an opportunity to connect with others in our church. Fun activities provided for youth, friends are welcome to join in on the fun!

Teen VBS

June 21-25 | 6:00-9:00pm | Cornerstone Community Church (420 W 3rd St, Red Wing).

Students entering grades K-6 are invited to join us for VBS: SHINE! Cost is 100% free to participate. There will be games, scripture memorization, and a message each night. Students do not need to register.

Red Wing ACES Baseball Game

June 30 | 7:30pm | Athletic Field

Students are invited to join us at the Red Wing Aces baseball game.

Ashleigh Overlander
Student Ministries Leader

National Covenant Properties

National Covenant Properties (NCP) lend funds for real estate projects throughout the United States. In 2020, NCP was able to provide funding for 44 projects totaling approximately \$32 million. If you are interested in supporting this program, you can deposit funds with NCP. Current interest rates being offered are;

Five year fixed rate certificate	2.50%
2 1/2 year fixed rate certificate	1.75%
Demand investment account	1.00%

Additional information and application forms are available in the church office.

If you have questions you can email NCP at ncp@nationalcovenantproperties.org or call (800)366-6273. Voicemails will be responded to during standard business hours, Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm CST.

Paul Resel
Treasurer

Vacation Bible School

VBS | JUNE 21-25, 2021 | 9:00 a.m. - NOON

Students entering grades K-6 are invited to join us for VBS: SHINE! Are you a glory giver or a glory getter? Children will have a blast as they learn about the crowns, or reward, believers in Jesus will earn as they shine for Him. One day they will have the honor of casting these crowns at the feet of their King! When it comes to our salvation, God did everything which means that He gets all the glory!



Cost is 100% free to participate, but would you consider making a donation to help with program costs? We appreciate any gift you may give to help make this space a great experience for our kids! You can give a donation at the bottom of the registration page. Thanks for helping support this ministry!

Space is limited and the registration deadline is June 1st. <https://www.redwingfirstcov.org/vbs.html>

*Please know that COVID guidelines may change at any moment. You may refer to the VBS registration page on the First Covenant website for the most recent guidelines.

TEEN VBS | JUNE 21-25, 2021 | 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Students entering grades 7-12 are invited to join Teens For Christ each night around games, scripture memorization, and a message each night. Students do not need to register. Located at Cornerstone Community Church (420 W 3rd St, Red Wing).

Questions?

For more information, contact our VBS Lead team:

- Lori Hart (651-385-0835)
- Suzie Kline (651-764-0924)
- Church Office (651-388-2385)

Mission Awareness of the Month—Faith in Action

Do your best to improve your faith by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love.

II Peter 1:5-7 (CFV)

Since 1998, Faith in Action has as its purpose to enrich area residents' lives through faith-based volunteer efforts while providing a program to the elderly and those with difficult life circumstances. It is committed to helping people in our community remain independent. With the help of approximately 250 volunteers, this organization provides transportation, friendly visiting, short-term (2-4 hours) respite for caregivers, a family caregiver support group, a book house call program, and Road to Recovery rides for people needing cancer radiation treatment in Minneapolis or Rochester. All services are provided without charge to the recipient.

Faith in Action encourages those who wish to volunteer to "start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can." We are fortunate to have Keith Johnson, the new Executive Director, as a member of our church community, and he would be more than happy to speak with anyone interested in volunteering.

Financial Secretary | Treasurer

OFFERING UPDATE:

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

21 weeks 2021 - \$176,352 (-10.8% under budget)

21 weeks 2020 - \$197,535

21 weeks 2019 - \$180,785

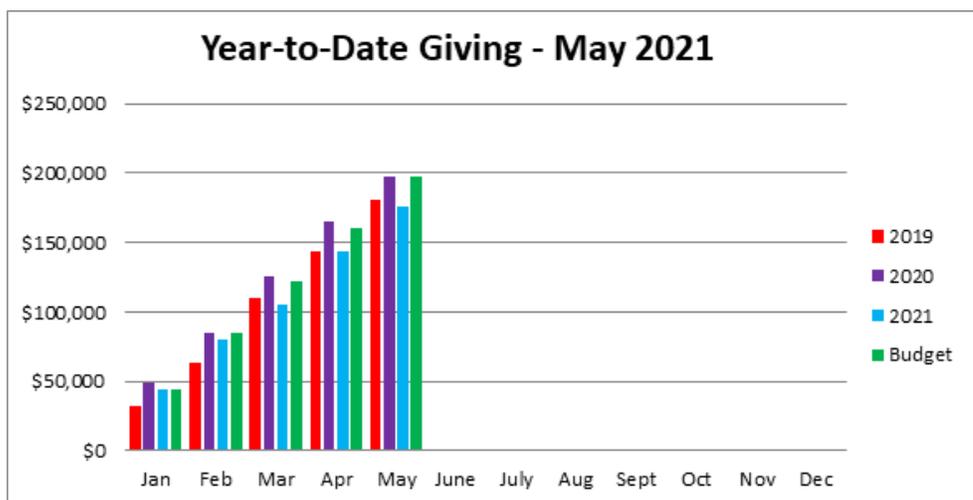
May Comparison:

4 weeks 2021 - \$33,133

4 weeks 2020 - \$32,890

4 weeks 2019 - \$36,917

NOTE: 2021 offerings to date include several large annual donations



First Covenant Family

FCC received a one-time offering of \$15,803 for paying down on the mortgage principal. The new payoff date is now 1 October 2026. We are blessed to have received this generous offering.

In Christ,
Paul Resel
Treasurer

Library Corner

The Library has been quiet, and we have caught up on getting books on the shelf, (and some off the shelves) I know not everyone is a reader, but we still want to encourage you to come in the Library and look around. We have many DVD's, many reference books, and biographies. We hope that you would consider checking the Library again Also, we are pretty low key in the church Library, but would like to encourage anyone that may have a book from the Library laying around and not brought back. Please consider checking your house for any books from First Covenant and bring them back. Thank You very much!!

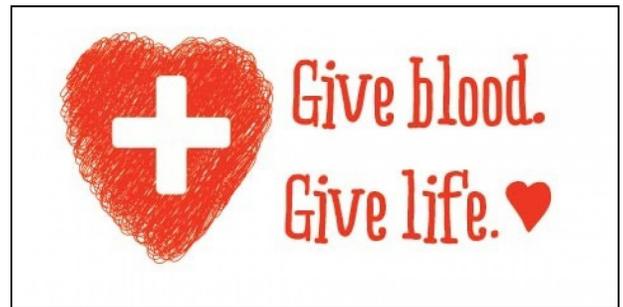
Church Block Parties | Church Picnic

Join us on June 16 and July 21 in the church parking lot for a block party filled with food, games, and an opportunity to connect with others in our church. Activities provided for kids and youth. We encourage you to take this opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to join us! Free will donation will be accepted to help cover the cost of food.

SAVE THE DATE: Summer Church Picnic | Sunday, August 22, 2021 | following the second service
All are welcomed. Invite your neighbors, friends, and family. More information to come.

Red Cross Blood Drive | Friday, July 9

First Covenant Church to host Red Cross Blood Drive on Friday, July 9 from 12:00 - 6:00 p.m. This is our 11th drive since we started in 2017. In the past we usually have 30 to 40 appointments to fill, this drive they are requesting 51. The last two drives appointments filled up quickly so register sooner than later. Register at redcrossblood.org or call the church office. There is a critical need for blood.



The American Red Cross has updated its pandemic safety protocols in alignment with CDC and OSHA guidance. Here's what you need to know:

- Fully vaccinated individuals including staff and blood donors will no longer need to wear face masks or socially distance beginning May 21.
- Unvaccinated individuals will continue to be required to wear face masks and socially distance.
- If your location requires face masks, the Red Cross will adhere to more stringent face mask requirements. Please notify your Red Cross Account Manager at least 72 hours before your next blood drive if face masks will be required by your organization.
- In addition, where state and/or local guidance is more stringent than the most recent CDC guidelines, we will follow the more stringent state or local guidelines.
- Proof of vaccination will not be a requirement. We trust that our blood donors will provide honest responses – it's what our eligibility process is built upon. We will continue to rely on the honesty of our blood donors when it comes to COVID-19 vaccination and face masks.

First Covenant enters into Phase 5

As of May 28, all of our covid response guidelines have been lifted, including our social distancing and max capacity guidelines. We will continue to monitor the situation moving forward and will update our guidelines if needed. On Sunday, May 30 the ropes will be removed from the pews to sit directly in front of each other. Also, we will no longer register your names as you come into church. Registration will take place in the pews.



June

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:30am Women's Bible Study 10:15am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	2 9:00am MOPS	3 9:30am Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Worship Team Practice	4	5 12:00pm FLC Reserved
				Darold on vacation June 3 - June 8		
6 Holy Communion Grad Sending 8:30am Blended Worship 10:30am Contemporary Worship	7 6:30pm Adult Softball	8 10:15am Staff Meeting	9 9:30am Women's Manuscript Study 6:30pm Youth Bonfire	10 9:30am Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Worship Team Practice 6:00pm MOPS Social	11	12
		Mike and Anna on vacation June 7 - June 10				
				Sarah out of the office		
13 8:30am Blended Worship 10:30am Contemporary Worship 12:00pm Young Adult Life Group	14 6:30pm Adult Softball	15 10:15am Staff Meeting	16 9:30am Women's Manuscript Study 5:30pm Church Block Party	17 9:30am Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Worship Team Practice	18	19
		LBBC Junior High Camp				
20 Father's Day 8:30am Blended Worship 10:30am Contemporary Worship	21 Newsletter Articles Due 6:30pm Adult Softball 7:30pm Adult Softball	22 10:15am Staff Meeting	23 9:30am Women's Manuscript Study	24 9:30am Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Worship Team Practice	25 Sarah out of office	26 5:00pm FLC Reserved
				ECC Annual Meeting Gather 2021		
		Vacation Bible School 9:00 a.m. to noon				
27 8:30am Blended Worship 10:30am Contemporary Worship	28 6:30pm Council Meeting	29 10:15am Staff Meeting	30 9:30am Women's Manuscript Study 7:30pm Youth Night Out			
		LBBC Trailblazer Camp				

Remembering Our Birthday Friends with Prayer

1st	Glen Mehrkens, Louise Erickson	21st	Ruth Resel
2nd	Leanne Sikkink, Don Overlander	22nd	Dianne Mehrkens
3rd	BJ Danielson	23rd	Don Hoffman, Ken Sherrard, Morgan McCann
6th	Barb Rutschow	24th	Heather Gadiant
7th	Steve Carlson, Marjean Johnson, Roger Johnson	25th	Brad Kimball, Judie Maybach, Tom Loquai, Ed Watzl
9th	JoAnn Dammann	26th	Lauren Buck
12th	Amy Van Loon, Ethan Ihrke, Nick Kline	27th	Greta Murphy
13th	Ian Dawson	29th	Bev Sander
18th	Jim Larson	30th	Justin Carlisle, Preston Carlisle

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!



First Covenant Church
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651-388-2385
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