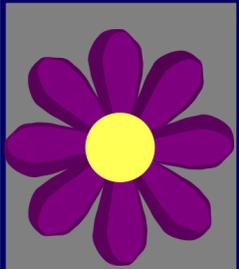


MARCH 2020



FIRST COVENANT CHURCH + RED WING, MN

MESSENGER

God's Call

Call to ministry is a mysterious, exhilarating, burdensome, beautiful thing. As we get ready to move, following our call to Michigan, I was reminded of a poem by Kilian McDonnell (a MN priest): *The Call of Abraham*

*Now the Lord said to Abram,
Go from your country." (Gen. 12:1)*

*Talk about imperious
Without a "may I presume?"
no previous contact,
no letter of introduction,
this unknown God
issues edicts.*

*This is not a conversation.
Am I a nobody
to receive decrees from one whose name
I do not know?*

*At seventy-five I hear
"God!" Am I supposed
to scuttle my life,
place my arthritic bones
upon the road
to some mumbled nowhere?*

*Let me get this straight.
I summarize.*

*In ten generations since the Flood
you have spoken to no one.
Now, like thunder on a clear day,
you give commands:
pull up my tent,
desert the graves of my ancestors,
for a country you do not name.*

*God of the wilderness,
from two desiccated lumps
you promise all people of the earth
will be blessed.*

*You come late, Lord, very late,
but my camels leave in the morning.*

-Fr. Kilian McDonnell

In no way do I mean to suggest that our call compares to Abraham's giant leap of faith into the great unknown of God's provision. However, God does have a way of making his purposes known – his purposes for something new – even in the midst of people you love, a church you are passionate about, and a place you call home. Our move to Michigan brings both tears and joy, and is filled with both loss and hope. And it is an answer to a call ... from God.

We have loved you, and you have loved us back. We will remember fondly all the big moments in the last four years at our church: a newly articulated vision, a new sound system, a new parking lot, the sanctuary renovation, Mike's call to become our Associate / Youth Pastor, the launch of Fusion, and the beginning of Hope & Harbor. We will remember the faces and costumes during our Christmas programs, "walking for water" in the rain with our Discovery Hour children, and the massive give-aways at Christmas time. We will remember the army of people who helped us unpack, then pack, then unpack ... three times. We will remember All-Church picnics with dunk tanks, pie-the-pastor, and watermelon eating contests. We will remember your generosity in providing water and life for a village in Zimbabwe Africa. We will remember baptisms and testimonies of how God moved in your lives. We will remember the growth of your faith stories, the prayers for healing, and the ah-ha moments where someone made a connection with God. We will remember the stories we walked together at funerals, weddings, in living rooms, in garages or in my office; the stories of deep angst and brokenness and the stories of victory and healing. We will remember ... you – you are family and we love you!

It is hard to follow God's call when it means leaving those we love and a place we love. But isn't that what walking with the Lord is all about? He is always calling us forward into his mysterious, exhilarating, burdensome, beautiful future. As we load *our* camels for this next part of our journey, we will be packing many memories and much love. From the deepest parts of our hearts, THANK YOU for your investment in us and *this* call in Red Wing.
Grace & Peace, Marc

MAR 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	
8 Confirmation/Breakfast Movie Night	No School	Fusion				
15 Confirmation/Breakfast Bowling Night		Fusion				
22 Confirmation/Breakfast Night Out		Fusion				
29 Confirmation/Breakfast Open Gym Night	Parent Connection 6:45pm	Fusion	APR 1	2	3	4

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

CONFIRMATION

Sundays, 9:45-10:30am in the Choir Room

Confirmation open to students in grades 7-8 as they explore the Old and New Testaments and discuss the building blocks of our faith. Students who complete this 2-year confirmation journey will also have the opportunity to be publicly affirm their faith before our congregation.

SENIOR HIGH BREAKFAST

Sundays, 9:45-10:30am in the Kitchen

Our gathering for students in grades 9-12. We gather together for breakfast, share with one another about our highs and lows, and have meaningful conversations on relevant topics.

FUSION AFTER SCHOOL GATHERING

Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00pm in the Family Life Center

An after school gathering for students in grades 5-7 as a safe space to build friendships with caring adults and develop various life skills. This year we offer learning experiences that students can pre-register for based on their interests.

LOOKING AHEAD

MOVIE NIGHT

March 8, 6:30-8:30pm in the Youth Room

Join us for a movie on the big screen! Popcorn and drinks will be provided. Everyone is asked to bring their favorite movie to watch. We will vote on which movie to watch the night of.

BOWLING NIGHT

March 15, 6:30-8:00pm at Bierstube

Join us for a night of bowling. Everyone is asked to bring \$2 for shoes if able. We will sponsor one hour of bowling and provide a few snacks to munch on.

NIGHT OUT

March 22, 5:30-7:00pm

Join us at Applebee's for half-priced apps! Everyone is asked to bring \$5 if able to help with cost. If you are coming, please let Mikey ahead of time so we know how many to plan on!

OPEN GYM NIGHT

March 29, 6:00-9:00pm

Join us for open gym & hang time in the Youth Room! We will also coordinate some large group games throughout the night like Nuke Em, Dodgeball, Sardines, etc. Bring a friend and come hang out with us!

PARENT CONNECTION

March 30, 6:45pm at Caribou Coffee.

Parents of teenagers are invited to come and connect with other parents! Share about the highs and lows of parenting, receive encouragement and prayer from one another, and discuss ideas how to navigate any situation you are facing. Grab your favorite Caribou drink and join us in upstairs!

SUMMER CAMP @ LBBC

Registration is now open for LBBC Summer Camp! We hope you will consider join us at Lake Beauty for an awesome week. Visit www.redwingfirstcov.org/camp to learn more info about what to expect at LBBC and how to register.

For regular announcements and live updates, text the phrase "FCCSM" to the number 81010 or join our Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/fccsm

Hope & Harbor Update

By all respects our inaugural season of Hope & Harbor has been a great success. To be sure, it has not been without its bumps and surprises but for most who have volunteered, the experience has been transformative. Our guests have also been blessed with overnight shelter, good meals, friendships that they didn't expect, and significant resources for their futures.

First Covenant Church played a massive role in getting this ministry off the ground. Of the 13 weeks that we ran the program, our church housed it 8 of those weeks. Your commitment to caring for the homeless in Red Wing was tremendous. As you provided overnight hours, dinners, breakfasts, hospitality, financial resources, and administrative assistance, help was given in Jesus' name. Obviously, we were not alone in this endeavor. Along the way, we were joined by, among others, nurses from Mayo, a city council member, business people, teachers, families, youth groups, State Senator Barb Haley, various members from Red Wing churches, and community volunteers who heard about the program and wanted to pitch in. Three other churches provided space and volunteers during their weeks: First Presbyterian, St. Paul's Lutheran, and Cornerstone Community Church.

Our Director, Liz Magill, went above and beyond in every possible way filling in gaps, training new volunteers, transporting guests to and from the hospital, shopping for everything from food to ear plugs, and generally doing everything to make H & H run. If you see her, thank her ... in as big a way possible.

By the end of the season (December – February), we hosted 31 guests, provided 567 bed nights of care, and served 1,134 meals. This was all done with 3,367 of volunteer hours! As many of the homeless in Red Wing are housed at the Parkway Motel, this translates to a \$36,855 savings of finances normally used for this purpose. We've spent about \$4,200 on supplies... including Christmas and Valentine's gifts, emergency needs such as clothes, gas, and bus tokens.

This would not have been possible without the help of some significant financial partners including United Way, the Jones Foundation, Mayo Health Clinic, and gifts from other individuals and businesses as well. The Red Wing Public Library has opened its doors during the day for our guests to hang-out and the YMCA has allowed guests to shower there in the mornings. These have been important pieces in allowing the homeless some level of dignity as they navigate life without a place to stay. I can't thank them enough.

Plans for next year are in the works with conversations and partnerships with other churches already being put in place. The hope is to have nine host churches and to expand the calendar to include much of November and March.

Thank you again for all the ways you have contributed to this life-giving ministry. "Truly I tell you whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." So says Jesus.

-Pastor Marc

Kwik Trip Cards

Thank you so much for supporting our Kwik Trip card purchases! Since August we have added nearly \$700 to our church coffers. This like another family putting \$100 every month in the offering plate! As a reminder our church immediately gets 5% of the face value of every card you purchase. Then when you use the card for in store purchases, we get another 5% rebate. Are we going to pay off the mortgage next month through Kwik Trip cards? Nooooo. J But we're certainly not going to turn down an extra \$100 a month either! Keep up the good work everyone!

First Covenant Church Offering Comparison

OFFERING UPDATE:

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

8 weeks 2020 - \$84,569 (+16.6% over budget)

8 weeks 2019 - \$63,649

8 weeks 2018 - \$69,769

February Comparison:

4 weeks 2020 - \$35,055

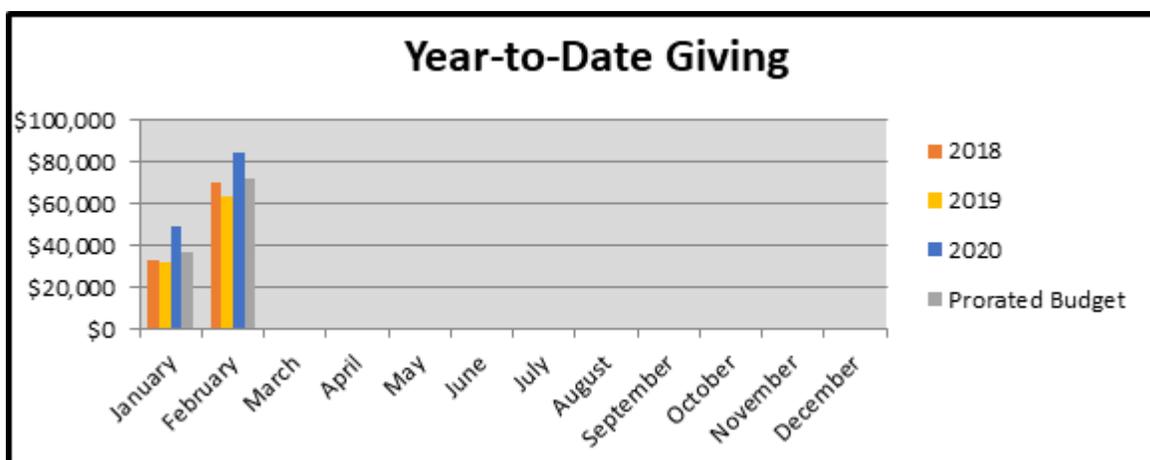
4 weeks 2019 - \$31,733

4 weeks 2018 - \$36,701

Re-Amortization Offerings: \$33,150

MN Teen Challenge Offerings: \$4,076

Note: 2020 offerings to date include several large annual donations.



Re-amortization Update

A total of \$33,150 was received from FCC members. This amount along with \$25,000 from the designated fund, "Building Fund", allowed \$58,150 to be paid down on the mortgage. Praise the Lord!

The remaining principal balance will be \$381,887.79. Beginning 1 April 2020, the new monthly mortgage payment will be \$5,253, or, \$1,360 per month less than the current payment of \$6,613. The mortgage will be paid off on 1 February 2027. Thank you to everyone for your prayers and support of this effort.

In Christ,

Paul Resel, Treasurer

New Series for Teens in the Church Library



The Prince Warriors series is a new epic fiction trilogy from author Priscilla Shirer. Filled with heart stopping adventure, captivating humor, intriguing mystery, these books promise to be an action-packed page-turner that you won't want to end. (4 books in all) Stop by the church library to check them out! Perfect for ages tween- teens.

Huge thank you to those that made these books available— what a fun addition to the library!

Awana for March and April



March	4	<u>No AWANA</u> (Spring Break)
	11	Affliction/Injury Night (Come with a band-aid or all bandaged up)
	18	March Madness Night (wear colors of your favorite college team)
	25	“Twins” Night - (Wear MN Twins gear or find a friend to dress like matching twins.)
April	1	Easter Story (Wear Spring colors) <u>AWANA Store Night</u>
	8	No Awana (Easter - He Has Risen!)
	15	AWANA Awards/Family Night

Awana Store Night

On April 1st, we will have our Awana Store Night. This is a special time for the Sparks and T&T kids to "spend " their points that they have earned for attendance, memory work, bringing friends, wearing their uniform, and remembering to bring their handbook and bible each week. We are in need of new or gently used stuffed animals, toys, jewelry and games, in addition to candy. You can look at the clearance aisles at the store when you are shopping or clean out your hidden treasures that you have not used! Bring your donated items to Sarah's office marked "Awana Store" by March 29.

Keep in mind these are for Kindergarten through 5th grade kids.

Thanks for your generosity in helping make this a great night for these kids who have worked very hard this year in their memory work!

Awards/Family Night

Awana is coming to the end of the year on Wednesday, April 15th. On this night we will celebrate with singing, memory work, awards, and a video presentation of the whole year. **All** are welcome to attend this last night of Awana. Come and see what these kids have learned throughout this whole year! It will start at 6:00 p.m. following supper and will finish at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Library Corner

This month we are will feature several popular Authors, that many of us have enjoyed reading. Starting with a home-grown author from Minnesota. JULIE KLASSEN writes about the regency era in England in a very interesting and compelling way. Each book is a stand-alone read. There is one 3 book series that should be read in sequence.

JOEL ROSENBERG is a prophecy writer about the Middle East. (Fiction of course) but he has lived there and writes from that perspective. LYNN AUSTIN beloved by those who read her books. She writes on many topics, one being the Old Testament when the Jews were in captivity in Babylon. Sounds like it might be boring but trust me it is compelling to get to the next book. These are series books and should be read in sequence. CRAIG PARSHAL Lis mystery/detective typewriter. For those of us who like intrigue and mystery, you need to check out his books. Last, but not least, TERRI BLACKSTOCK is a writer that will hold your interest and keep you turning the pages.

We hope we have peaked your interest to come into to our Church Library and browse around to find the book you are looking for before spring and all your gardening starts. (We don't have seed catalogs!!!)

Jan Jordahl
Library Committee

Remembering Our Birthday Friends with Prayer

3rd	Matthew Lu	20th	Millie Mehrkens
4th	Penny Droogsma, Paul Olson, Carol Jennings	24th	Jeff Hanson
5th	Joe Larson	25th	Anthony Mason
7th	Nikki Roschen	26th	Judy Nelson
8th	Lori Johnson, Ron Tesdall	27th	Pam Peterson
10th	Rose Larson	28th	Todd Mehrkens
11th	Lori Hart	29th	Lydia Mason
14th	Ryan Alpers	30th	Diane Goudy
16th	Hope Coffey	31st	Lara Ramthun, Brandon Evans

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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