



To whom it may concern,

We believe there is a huge opportunity to spread the Gospel among youth in our community and start a revival within our schools! In 2019, it was estimated that about 10% of junior and senior high students are engaged with local church ministries in Red Wing. In addition, our youth often share about the harsh pushback they get when talking about their faith at school. Because of this huge potential to share Christ with our youth and change the culture about Jesus in our schools, I am excited to announce that we are officially re-launching Young Life in Red Wing and ask that you would prayerfully consider being a blessing to our youth by partnering with us!

Let me share with you about how we got to this place! Three years ago our congregation at First Covenant Church began a journey of starting an after school program for middle school students in Red Wing. After receiving input from other local organizations, it was discerned that there was a huge need in our city around three areas: (1) provide a safe space for students after school, (2) a place where students can find support and encouragement from caring adults, and (3) offer opportunities for students to develop various life skills. After great partnerships were formed with Goodhue County 4H, Red Wing Youth Outreach, and Every Hand Joined, we launched Fusion. This after school program meets weekly on Tuesdays from 3-5pm at First Covenant Church (which is a short walk down the road from Twin Bluff Middle School).

What started with just 7 students has now grown to about 80 students attending weekly for what has become “the best day of their week” as some students have shared. Between all of the fun, food, and games of Fusion, there were caring adults committed to assisting students with homework, providing support and encouragement to build up their social and emotional health, and facilitating “Learning Experiences” (which are elective classes provided for free which included a small engine class, baking/cooking classes, art classes, outdoor adventure experiences, sports camps and more).

As Fusion continues to expand, we began discussions on funding a part-time Fusion Coordinator that can help give direct investment into the planning and execution of our weekly gatherings. Right now we are mostly a volunteer-led program. But as the need continually grows for recruiting adult volunteers, coordinating schedules, finding resources, and organizing future program plans; having a dedicated staff person will help ensure that Fusion is accomplishing its purposes well.

In addition, we at First Covenant Church want to continue to expand our efforts in providing safe places for students in Red Wing to find support from caring adults and to hear the good news of Jesus Christ! In order to make this dream a reality, we were led to start a new faith-based gathering for students on Thursdays through the ministry of Young Life. As you may know, Young Life is a Christian organization that reaches out to students through a team of adults who are concerned enough about kids to go to them, on their turf and in their culture, to build bridges of authentic friendship centered on Christ. At Young Life gatherings, they host “parties with a purpose”; creating an environment that students want to be in while inviting students to find hope and an abundant life in Christ. This pursuit has given us the opportunity to expand this Fusion Coordinator to include launching and providing oversight to Young Life as well. By adding Young Life, we would be able to offer a second opportunity each week for students in our city to find the support and encouragement they may need!

Now all of that happened before COVID hit! The week we intended to start this fundraising campaign was the exact same week the world shut down (true story)! Since March, we have had to put everything on pause. While we hoped to launch RWYL this fall, we decided to push it back a year. This is not only because of needing to fundraise, but also because Fusion will not be operating this fall. However, we believe that God’s calling for us has not changed! There is much that we can still do during this time to care for the youth in our city and share the hope of Christ! Therefore, we have decided to move forward with this fundraising campaign and begin steps to relaunch RWYL!

In order to see this exciting opportunity happen in our community, we are looking to raise \$42,000 annually. This amount will allow us to make this dream a reality by staffing a 30-hour per week Young Life + Fusion Coordinator, as well as fund training, additional resources for programming, and scholarships for students to experience life at summer camp! But we cannot do this without your help! Would you prayerfully consider becoming a financial supporter in order that we, together, may continue providing the best opportunities we can to invest in and support our youth here in Red Wing? If there are 117 people who commit to giving just \$30 per month, we would be fully funded and can begin to work hard to see these great things happen!

Feel free to visit our webpage www.redwingfirstcov.org/rwyl for more information, to give online, or follow us on Facebook! Thank you for your investment in the life and faith of our community’s youth!

Michael Bechtold
Associate Pastor
First Covenant Church