

Community Covenant Church
 122 S Main Street
 PO Box 278
 Upsala, MN 56384

Phone: 320-573-2672

Email: covenant@upsalacov.org
 www.upsalacov.org

Pastor Steve Weihsmann
 Senior Pastor
 steve@upsalacov.org
 (218) 428-8010

Zach Klein
 Youth Ministries
 zach@upsalacov.org
 (763) 242-7237

COMMUNITY COVENANT CHURCH
CHRONICLES

Publication of Community Covenant Church, Upsala, MN

January/February 2024

Thank you to everyone who participated in Operation Christmas Child. We sent 62 boxes this year! We pray that many children will hear about Jesus and make decisions to follow him through our boxes.



Want to Save a Life?

It takes one hour of your day to donate one pint of blood which can save up to 3 lives. Consider donating at our Red Cross Blood Drive on : **Monday, January 8, 2024, 1-6pm.** Sign up at the Welcome Center or sign up [online](http://redcrossblood.org) at redcrossblood.org.



Covenant Women Committee

It's time to restructure the serving committees maintained by Covenant Women. Those committees serve for funerals, baby showers, wedding showers, and other church functions as needed. If you want to remain on a committee, no action is required. If you would like to serve with us, want to change your committee assignment, or want to take a sabbatical, let Wanda Erickson know by January 7. Thank you all for helping our fellowship care for one another.

What's inside?

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Community Covenant Church
 Welcomes You!



**2024 Church Motto:
 LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD;
 FED BY THE WORD OF GOD**

A GREAT THANKSGIVING

Christmas will be on everyone's mind as this newsletter comes out, but I am thinking back to Thanksgiving and our family trip to Texas.

It was warmer there, but that is not what made it special. We had non-traditional foods: ham and brussels sprouts at my brother's, brisket at our daughter's home, but that is not what made it memorable. There was a snowstorm on the way back, delaying us a day—lots of cars and trucks in the ditch, but that is not what sticks in my mind.

Two significant spiritual events happened.

One was a reconciliation with my sister-in-law, from whom we had been estranged for over a year. We were never going to be invited to her home after a falling out but were graciously hosted this year. She was uncommonly vulnerable to Anne, sharing some deep prayer needs, even as our prayer for restoration to her was answered.

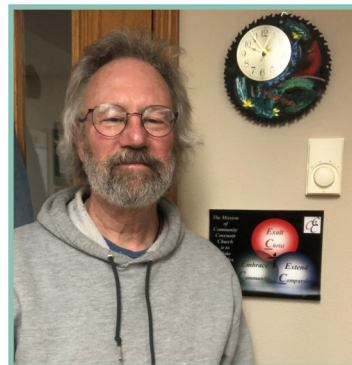
The other was shared with us as we drove home on Sunday. Our eight-year-old granddaughter Facetimed with us to relate that she had become a Christian that morning in Sunday School. With her teacher's help, she prayed a prayer of commitment to Christ.

While some wonderful temporal events transpired over the holiday—singing hymns with my mom, playing football with the teen boys and another grandpa, assembling a toy kitchen for the youngest grandchild who celebrated her third birthday, seeing Uncle Darrin's '57 Chevy, meeting some new friends—it was the two events that registered in eternity that I will cherish.

---Pastor Steve

"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1

"I tell you that...there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."
Luke 15:7



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship- Mokahum 6PM Comm Life	5 1 PM & 7 PM Women's Bible Study 8 PM Men's Bible Study	6	7 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam/ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	8	9	10
11 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 6PM Comm Life	12 1 PM & 7 PM Women's Bible Study	13 March/April Newsletter Deadline	14 No Activities <i>Valentine's Day</i> Ash Wednesday	15	16 Ignite Winter Retreat Friday- Sunday	17 Creation Ministries
18 No Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship with Communion & Creation Minis- tries - Meal 6PM Comm Life	19 President's Day 8 PM Men's Bible Study	20	21 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam/ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	22	23	24 Camp Lebanon Annual Meeting
25 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 6PM Comm Life	26 1 PM & 7 PM Women's Bible Study	27	28 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam/ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	29		

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 No Activities	4	5 Mega Fun at CL starts at 8PM	6 Mega Fun at Camp Lebanon thru Sunday AM
7 9:00 AM Sun-day School 10:15 AM Worship 6:30 PM All Church Life	8 11-6 PM Red Cross Blood Drive 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	9 7:00 PM Properties Team Meeting	10 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam /ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	11 7PM LT Mtg	12 Annual Reports Due Today	13
14 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 PM Baked Potato Fundraiser 1:30 JMT 6:30 PM All Church Life	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 	16 7:00 PM Worship Team Meeting	17 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam /ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	18 11:30 AM Ladies day out 1:30 PM CW Meeting	19	20
21 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship w/Communion 6:30 PM All Church Life	22 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	23	24 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam/ALand 6:30 PM Ignite	25	26	27
28 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:30 Meal 135th Annual Meeting 6:30 All Church Life Group	29	30	31 6 PM meal 6:20 PM JTeam/ALand 6:30 PM Ignite			

<p>Office Hours</p> <p>Monday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Tuesday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Wednesday 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM Thursday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM</p> <p>122 S. Main Street PO Box 278 Upsala, MN 56384 320-573-2672 covenant@upsalacov.org www.upsalacov.org</p> <p>Evangelical Covenant Church www.covchurch.org Northwest Conference</p>	<p>January Worship Servers</p> <p>Ushers: Trent & Elizabeth V</p> <p>Nursery Workers 7 Richard Blonigen & Trygg Aleckson 14 Cheryl Warga & Isabella Warga 21 Karen Hoffman & Evie Aleckson 28 Michelle Aleckson & Nora Hollerman</p> <p>Prayer 7 Sandi Soderberg 14 Pastor Steve 21 Phil Johnson 28 Leif Johnson</p> <p>Scripture Linda Pepin Evie Aleckson Robin Block Sharon Gaebel</p>	<p>February Worship Servers</p> <p>Ushers: Kirt & Tanya Olson</p> <p>Nursery Workers 4 Elizabeth & Benjamin Vandergon 11 Tim Peterson & Trygg Aleckson 18 Jesse Aleckson & Bella Warga 25 Karen Hoffman & Lucy Aleckson</p> <p>Prayer 4 Rudy King 11 Pastor Steve 18 Steve Woller 25 Wanda Erickson</p> <p>Scripture Nancy King Benjamin V. Cyd Woller Sheila Brezinka</p>
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Staying Connected

We send out a Sunday bulletin and bi-monthly newsletter via email. If you aren't receiving them, call the church office at 320-573-2672, or send us an email: covenant@upsalacov.org

Publication Deadlines:

Sunday bulletin: 10pm Wednesday
 Monthly newsletter: 13th of February, 15th of April, June, August, October, & December

Jan Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 - Noah Vandergon
- 2 - Matthew Schneider
- 3 - Jesse & Michelle Aleckson
- 4 - Raquel Crowe
- 7 - Eli Johnson
- 9 - Bill & Amber Koopmeiners
- 11 - Joseph Guthrie
- 13 - Gillian Pundsack
- 14 - Michael & Rachel Pangrac
- 17 - Wendy Voronyak
- 22 - Dean Peterson
- 23 - Halsey Stocker & Linda Temp
- 24 - Laura Blonigen
Karen Hoffman
- 25 - Jeanne Peterson
- 26 - Mona Johnson
- 29 - Robin Block
- 30 - Micah Ripplinger
- 31 - Susie Ripplinger

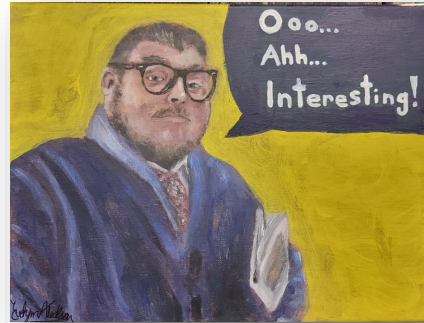
Feb Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 - Marilyn Woldstad
- 4 - Ryan Crowe
- 6 - Crew Van Sloten
- 8 - Sheila Brezinka
- 8 - Tim & Patty Peterson
- 9 - Arlene Warga, Elizabeth Vandergon, Ron Guthrie
- 12 - Anders Aleckson, Aliah Warga
- 14 - Evie Aleckson
- 16 - Larry Bartells
- 19 - Tony Cluka
- 26 - Amy Klug, Arrow Cluka



Learning To WAIT this season of Advent.

We spent time going through a series called “Waiting” in the last few weeks before our Christmas party and break. “Waiting” was about Advent and what it meant for the people of the Bible to wait for Jesus the first time, and our continued waiting for Jesus to return. It was great to learn that even though waiting is hard to do, God can teach us things during waiting that lead to real excitement when the moment comes.



- IGNITE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY!

On December 13th, we had our annual Ignite Christmas Party which included our White Elephant Gift Exchange. Each year there are funny gifts given and this year was no exception. The highlights this year were a creepy clown doll, a gnome that I believe has been passed around for YEARS!, a candle with Zach’s face on it, which has shown up for the last 3 years and this year Evie Aleckson painted and brought a portrait of Zach, which is flattering but weird. :-)

Thank you to Paul and Susie Ripplinger for hosting again this year. It is always a great time to have some fun together as Ignite.



WINTER RETREAT IS COMING!

- IGNITE will have a Winter Retreat Feb. 16-19 at Adventurous Christians in Grand Marais. It will cost \$200. More information to follow.



A Message from Ben Gerth

Hello Community Covenant Church,

Thank you for your prayers and support! We appreciate you. We praise God for the exciting work that he is doing in Tanzania.

Praise God that the Jita New Testament has been sent to the printer. Please pray that it will be printed accurately and shipped safely to Tanzania.

Praise God for all of the typesetting projects that Ben was able to finish. Now all of these people groups have more access to God's Word in their language: the book of Matthew in the Isenye language, the book of Genesis in the Simbiti language, the book of Acts in the Bende language.

The book of Matthew in the Isenye language is the first full book of Scripture ever printed in that language. Very exciting! Last year Ben typeset the Christmas story in the Isenye language. The people loved it so much that they begged us to print the entire story. They are hungry for God's Word in their own language.

Currently, Ben is typesetting the New Testament in the Zinza language.

Please pray that Ben will have good communication with the teams in Tanzania.

Please pray for the health of our family. We have been struggling with various long-term health problems and it's been discouraging. Pray that God would heal us, and that we would keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

We love you all.

-Ben and Jeannette Gerth serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators
Children: Kara (17), Luke (15), Ellie (15), Jenna (13)

Hello all,

Thank you so much for your prayers, partnership, and encouragement! It is such a blessing and honor to be serving the Lord alongside each of you. Currently, I have been hard at work with full-time language school. Full of the inevitable highs and lows of language learning, it has been a blessing to see how God has been at work throughout the whole process. In addition to language school, I have been working closely with my team leader as we create new structures and processes for recruiting, onboarding, team structure, and more. This has in turn lead into helping our four new teammates land and settle into their new lives and ministries here. Lastly, I have begun working alongside local artists at a communal gallery space called le Pavé d'Orsay located in the heart of the city. Through this, God has opened doors for multiple gospel conversations with local artists, practicing my French, and building community within the local arts scene.

Once again, thank you all for your prayers and encouragement as I continue to settle and build the foundation for ministry here.

Blessings,
Colin Welch

Jamaica Mission Trips



This marks the 24th year of Community Covenant Church working together with our Jamaican friends.

This year's team will be partnering with Randy Finnikin at Spring Village Training Center, under the construction guidance of Jeff Peterson from Mission Jamaica. You have done an amazing job of providing support towards our JaBode build. This JaBode will be used as a dorm by vocational training students who don't have other housing options.

Please pray for our team members as we prepare now and travel from **March 16-23, 2024.**

- Emma Sagle
- Kyle Bergem
- Ethan Bergem
- Linda Piasecki
- Dave Piasecki
- Hannah Hauschild
- Kelsey Bergem
- Erik Olson
- Kari Berggren(Olson)
- Zac Piasecki

Please pray for Dave & Linda Piasecki as they travel to Kingston, Jamaica **January 26-February 3** to serve at 2 schools and visit with some of the alumni from Jamaica Christian Boys Home whom we have known since 2002.

Please pray for the people of Jamaica.

Thank you for the financial donations, school supplies, and tools that have been donated.

Items we are still in need of include: paint brushes and roller pads, 6x8 blue tarps, tap con drill bits 5/32 and 3/16, 7 1/4 in saw blades, and #2 Phillips screwdriver bits.

For crafts: construction paper.



Christmas Program

What a wonderful experience we all shared during the children's Christmas program.



The kids did a great job singing and being in the nativity scene. Thanks to all the parents for bringing their kids and to the leaders who helped make this a special Sunday we will not soon forget.

If you missed the program and still want to see it, contact Elizabeth Vandergon at (320) 309-1764 to check out a recorded DVD of the program.



135th Annual Meeting

All members and friends are welcome to attend the **135th Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 28, 2024.** Only members are able to vote on motions. The meeting will be held immediately following the meal after church. Please have all **Annual Meeting reports** to the office by Friday, **January 12.** Email is preferred.



Women’s Bible Study - The Roadmap through Revelation

The Women’s Bible Study this winter is **“The Roadmap through Revelation,”** taught by Nancy King.



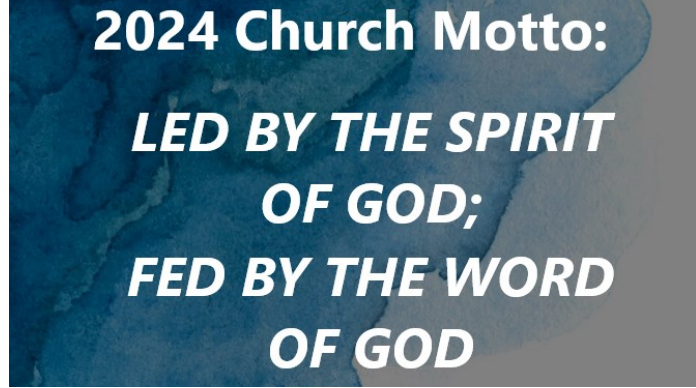
In February and March we will be studying the Hebrew book of Revelation. Revelation contains 404 verses and 278 are quotes or allusions to the Testament! This will be a very different study than most as we understand the book

of Revelation through the picture of the Menorah, biblical covenants and the ancient Hebrew marriage contract. It is about the Wedding of the Lamb Jesus and His bride. Along with understanding the book of Revelation, we will also be shedding light on many Hebrew customs that are evident in Revelation (as well as many other books of the Bible.) There will be a teaching on Mondays along with 5 daily lessons for each week.

Join us on Mondays, Feb. 5, 12, 26, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25 either at 1:00-3:00pm or 7:00-9:00pm. The same material will be taught both times.

Please sign up at the welcome center so that we can reserve a book for you. The cost will be \$10 with Covenant Women subsidizing the rest of the cost.

If you have questions, see Nancy King or Cyd Woller.



All-Church Life Groups

We are trying something old (it has been done before,) but new to us in this season of church life.

On the four Sunday nights in January, from 6:30-7:30 p.m., we will have ALL-CHURCH LIFE GROUPS. We would love for everyone to come for these

four times of study and fellowship. We will get snacks and then divide into spontaneous groups around tables in the Great Room. There is a new motto for 2024: LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD; FED BY THE WORD OF GOD. Two of the studies will be around the Holy spirit; two around the Bible. You do not need to do anything ahead of time, just bring a Bible. There is a sign-up sheet in the Welcome Center (so we can print materials.) Please indicate if you need a ride or childcare. It will be an excellent way to begin the New Year!

Join the **Sunday All-Church Life Group**, starting January 7th at 6:30pm. Contact Pastor Steve Weihsmann if you have any questions (218) 428-8010

Covenant Women - Save the Dates

January 18, 2024 Ladies Day Out at **11:30 am.** LUNCH at Java Jitters Sauk Centre. Women can carpool from church, leaving at 11 am or you can drive on your own. We will order off the menu.

ALERT, CW has begun planning an event for men. Help us with plans by attending the next CW Team meeting. It will be held on **January 18 at 1:30 pm** at the church.

February 19, 2024 *Time of Connection* will be held at Upsala Senior Living where CW will host Bingo. The games begin at 1 pm. Bring a friend.

30th Annual CW Women's Christmas Banquet **December 5, 2024** - Jenny Thyng, speaker

16th Annual Cookies By The Pound sale **December 14, 2024.**