

Community Covenant Church
122 S Main Street
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COMMUNITY COVENANT CHURCH CHRONICLES

Publication of Community Covenant Church, Upsala, MN **November/December 2024**

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*The Advent Season
will begin on
Sunday, December 1*

*CW Christmas Gathering
Thursday, December 5, 5:30pm*

*CW Christmas Cookie Sale
Saturday, December 14, 8:00-11:30am*

*Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 15, 10:15 am*

*Our Christmas Eve Service
will be held on
December 24 at 9:00 PM*



Dear J Team,
Adventureland,
and Sunday
School Teachers;

This fall we had a
great start to all
of our programs
because of you.

Thank you for
volunteering in
this important
ministry.



**Fresh Baked from Bethlehem,
the House of Bread**

The Children's Christmas concert will be held on December 15, 2024 during the worship service at 10:15 AM.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON CHRONIC PAIN

Over the years in ministry, I have learned a few things about chronic pain.

First, and to no one's surprise, pain hurts. It causes people who suffer with it great discomfort. It seems a betrayal of the body by the body, an unwelcome visitor turned resident. It makes people grimace and put on a face that at times seems angry. It is hard to find a position that offers some relief. Sometimes there is a sudden shout because of the hurt, or a defiant outcry; sometimes a whimper; always the unpleasant knowledge that the offending injury will come again, either predictably or unexpectedly.

Second, it discourages the spirit, robs it really, of joy. Not necessarily of hope, but certainly of the usual positive pleasure of living. Waiting through *acute* pain is tolerable because it will pass. Waiting through *chronic* pain results in resignation, looking for small respites rather than a return to normalcy. The spirit grieves, going through the typical stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. A friend commented once, "It is hard to get better when you are always doing worse." Sounds like something Yogi Berra would have said.

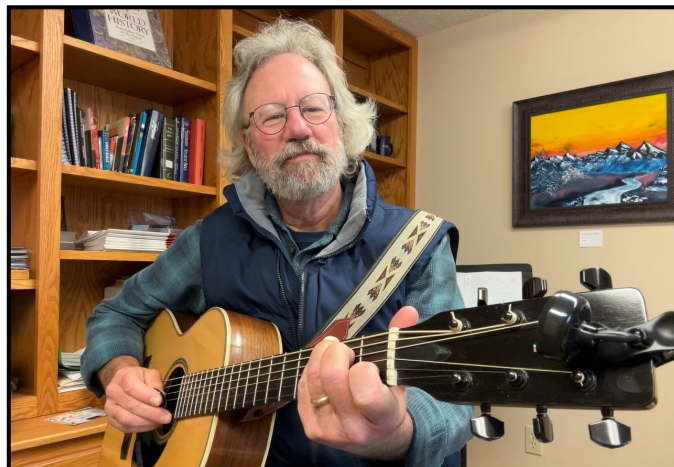
Third, it is hard on the people around, who are impacted by the physical and emotional strain, which they must, may, or do share. It is difficult to be the one who is *not* in pain, watching someone suffer and not being able to fix what is wrong. If the one suffering is a complainer, it is hard to hear the constant grumbling, the litany of body parts or systems which are malfunctioning, repeated every time people who have not yet heard come into the orbit of the one with the unending ache.

Sometimes there is a fourth and spiritual component to the torment...wondering if there is an unconfessed sin at the root of the problem, or a messenger of Satan, like Paul's "thorn," to be acknowledged. If Job is among the literature of lament, the wondering might prompt a question as to whether it is a test from God to see if faith will be sustained. And *will* faith be sustained?

I would encourage all of us who do not deal with chronic pain to be understanding of those who do, and to pray for God's grace for these sisters and brothers. No one asks for this.

There is this good news: someday God will say, "**No more!**" and all the hurt will stop. Someday God will close the door on every kind of trouble.

"There will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; [these things] have passed away." (Revelation 21:4). ~Pastor Steve



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>1st Sunday of Advent</i> 10:15 Worship 6:00 PM CLG	2 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	3	4 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	5 <i>CW Christmas Gathering</i> 5:30 PM Doors Open 6 PM Hors d'oeuvres 7 PM Concert by Jenni Thyng	6	7
8 <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00 AM SS 10:15 AM Worship 12:00 Covenant Trust Lunch 6:00 PM CLG	9	10	11 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	12 7pm Leadership Meeting	13	14 8:00-11:30 AM Covenant Women Cookie Sale Kids Christmas Practice Time- TBD
15 <i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00 AM Adult SS 10:15 AM <i>Kids Christmas Program</i>	16 <i>Jan/Feb Newsletter Items Due</i> 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	17	18 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	19	20	21
22 <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i> 10:15 Worship with Communion	23	24 9 PM <i>Christmas Eve Service</i> 	25 <i>Christmas Day</i>	26	27	28
29 10:15 AM Worship	30 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>				

November 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
CLG: Community Life Group					1 Children's Team Meeting 9 am	2 LBBC Annual Meeting 9:30 am
3 Turn clock back one hour 9:00 AM SS 10:15 AM Worship 12:00 Jamaica Lunch 6:00 PM CLG	4 1:00 & 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	5 Election Day 	6 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	7	8	9
10 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 6:00 PM CLG	11 1:00 & 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study	12 7:00 PM Worship Team Meeting 7:00 PM Property Team Meeting	13 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	14	15	16
17 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship w/ Communion 6:00 PM CLG	18 1:00 & 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study 8:00 PM Men's Bible Study	19	20 Operation Christmas Child boxes due 6:00 PM - Meal 6:20 PM J Team Adventureland 6:30 PM Ignite	21	22	23
24 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 6:00 PM CLG	25	26	27 No Activities	28 <i>Happy Thanksgiving Day</i>	29	30 10:00 AM Christmas Decorating at church

Office Talk

<p>Office Hours</p> <p>Tuesday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Wednesday 9:00 AM - 2:00 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 Evangelical Covenant Church www.covchurch.org Northwest Conference www.northwestconference.org</p>	<p>November Worship Servers</p> <p>Ushers: Jim & Sam Warga</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Prayer</td> <td>Scripture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Pastor Steve</td> <td>Sheila Brezinka</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 Sandi Solderberg</td> <td>Ginny Koopmeiners</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17 Sheri Johnson</td> <td>Robin Block</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 Wendy V.</td> <td>Dan Voronyak</td> </tr> </table> <p>Nursery Workers: <i>The Nursery is open but unstaffed</i></p>	Prayer	Scripture	3 Pastor Steve	Sheila Brezinka	10 Sandi Solderberg	Ginny Koopmeiners	17 Sheri Johnson	Robin Block	24 Wendy V.	Dan Voronyak	<p>December Worship Servers</p> <p>Ushers: Ken & Molly Abrahamson</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Prayer</td> <td>Scripture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Pastor Steve</td> <td>Lydia Prout</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 Wendy V.</td> <td>Ginny Koopmeiners</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 Dan V.</td> <td>Nina Prout</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22 Leif Johnson</td> <td>Arlene Warga</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29 Wanda Erickson</td> <td>Patty Groetsch</td> </tr> </table> <p>Nursery Workers: <i>The Nursery is open but unstaffed</i></p>	Prayer	Scripture	1 Pastor Steve	Lydia Prout	8 Wendy V.	Ginny Koopmeiners	15 Dan V.	Nina Prout	22 Leif Johnson	Arlene Warga	29 Wanda Erickson	Patty Groetsch
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Staying Connected

We send out Sunday bulletins and bi-monthly newsletters 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: February 13, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, & December 16



Camp Events/Announcements



Lake Beauty Bible Camp

Fall Quilt Session 1: November 7-11, 2024
 Fall Quilt Session 2: November 14-18, 2024
 9th Annual Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner - Saturday, December 7, 2024
 Young Adult Retreat: December 28-30, 2024

Camp Lebanon

Congratulations to Greg Standafer, the New Executive Director!

Quilt Retreats:

(October 31)	November 1-3 (3-5)	Quilt & Craft - A (A+ & A1-2)
November (7)	8-10 (10-12)	Quilt & Craft - B (B+ & B1-2)
November (14)	15-17 (17-19)	Quilt & Craft - C (C+ & C1-2)
November (21)	22-24 (25)	Quilt & Craft - D (D+ & D1)
December (5)	6-8 (9)	Quilt & Craft - E (E+ & E1)



See You At The Pole (SYATP) - 2024 September 25 was a big success!

SYATP is a student-led event where they meet before school to pray for their *families, friends, teachers, school, city, state, and nation*. The theme for SYATP 2024 was "First, Pray" from 1 Timothy 2:1.



Please continue to lift our youth up to the Lord to lead Godly lives.

If you don't receive the weekly text reminders, please signup by texting @igniteccc to 81010.

Enter this number **81010** ?
Text this message **@igniteccc** ?

IGNITE Student Ministry

Wednesday from 6:30—8:30pm

Confirmation & DLT

Sundays from 9:00-10:00am

Youth Room & Classroom #5

Operation Christmas Child Due November 20

This past year 98 countries were participating. 11.3 million shoeboxes were delivered. 5.1 million children participated in The Greatest Journey. 2.9 million decisions were made for Christ.

We appreciate your donations to Operation Christmas Child.



Missionary Update



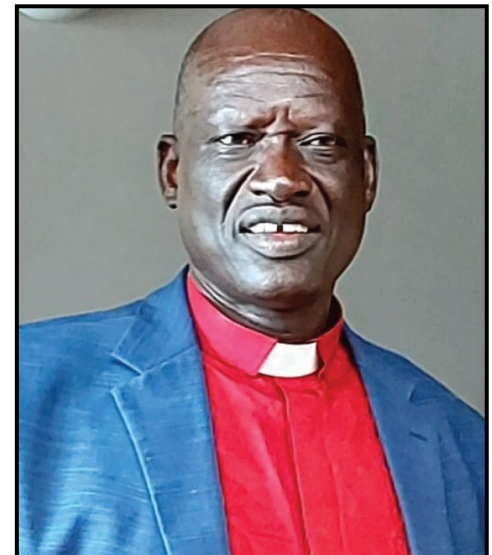
News from **Ben Gerth!**

Ben just finished a really big typesetting project. He typeset the New Testament in the Zinza language of Tanzania. The entire document is about 900 pages long, and Ben formatted every single one!

Our missionary **James Tang** is asking for prayer to help him get to the hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. James has dealt with a number of medical issues over the past years.

Contact:

james.tang@covchurch.org



Country of Service:
South Sudan and Ethiopia

Missionary Update

Learning to Lean on the Lord

The last 6 months have been a difficult time for the Ruck household. Many of you may have seen our updates on Facebook, but after Charlie's birth in January of this year Jo struggled deeply with postpartum anxiety and depression. I did not know what to do when she was having crippling anxiety attacks. Nothing I could say or do was helping. I was lost and scared. And so I prayed.

On Sundays, I preach about God hearing our prayers. I preach about God answering them. However, when I am in need, when I call out to God, I often find myself not expecting Him to answer me. I often pray for strength so that I might endure, or I pray for wisdom so that I might make the correct decisions, yet this time I just called out for us to be rescued. And we were.

The Church came to our rescue. I mean the capital "C" church. Because, while the community of Mustard Seed rallied around us, it was other people from other churches in Nagoya that came to our rescue. We found support, help, guidance, and love from the Body of Christ in Nagoya.

When we tell the story of the Good Samaritan, we often imagine ourselves as the Samaritan in the story. When I tell this story to my children I try to communicate that we ought to help those in need. It's true, in our lives, we are sometimes the Samaritan. However, there are other times when we are the man lying injured by the road. In the moments of pain and struggle it can be hard to call out for help. Our pride can hold us back or our fear can halt our words. It is in asking for help that we allow the church around us to exercise the gifts of mercy and generosity that God has gifted to His community of believers.

This year, we called out and God answered our prayers through the Church. Anxiety and fear have not disappeared from our lives, but we know that we are not alone and we know that the God, who created the heavens and the earth, has sent His church to support us.

This year as we live in Nagoya we are praising the Lord for what God has done in our lives, how He has cared for us, and how He has rescued us. We have come to depend on God more. We have learned to lean on Him in our times of need and to truly trust that He will rescue us. God is good!

Please keep us in your prayers as we go forward. Pray for Jo as she cares for our four children and manages our household in Japan. Pray for Nora, Judy, and Eddie as they continue to go to school and grow in their faith. Pray for Charlie that he will eat, sleep, and grow well. Pray for me as I continue to work at CBI and with Mustard Seed to make disciples in Nagoya. In Christ's Love.

~Will & Jo Ruck, Serving with Relevant International Missions

Events & Happenings



Sunday Night Community Life Group

Meets on Sunday evenings at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary. We will be watching season four of The Chosen. All ages are welcome. If you have questions, please contact Bruce Warga @ 320-493-0672.



Covenant Trust financial planning seminar will be held, **Sunday, December 8** after the service.

Lunch provided

Presenter: Steve Allison

Email: srallison@covenanttrust.com

Phone: [847-583-3264](tel:847-583-3264)

Mark your calendar.

Make a difference.

American Red Cross Blood Drive
Monday, January 6 between **12 and 6pm**
at **Community Covenant Church.**

That means a comfy bench to lie on and rest for 1/2 hour,

a chance to chat with new people and eat tasty snacks.

Sign up in December for your 1-hour slot.

Help save a life!

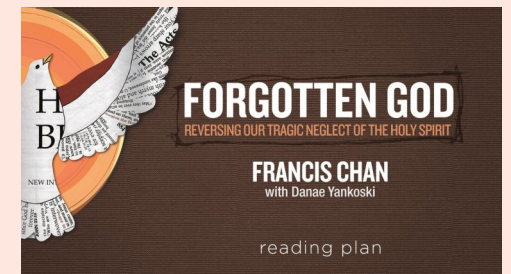


Attention Women,

FORGOTTEN GOD - REVERSING OUR TRAGIC NEGLECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Francis Chan

January 2025 Bible Study



Annual CW Christmas Banquet

6

You are invited to see

Jenni Thyng of Joy In All Seasons

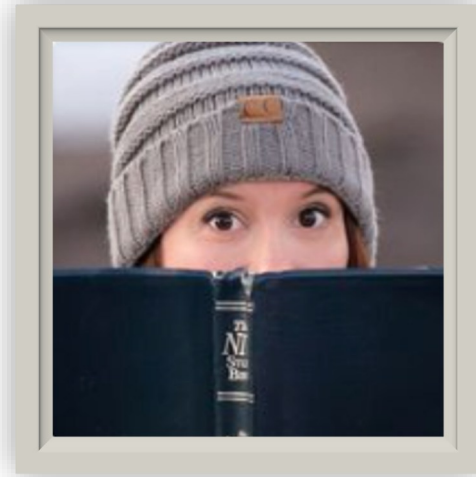
at our Covenant Women's Banquet.

Theme: **O Christmas Tree**

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things You have done.

I will be filled with JOY because of you. I will sing praises to Your Name, O Most High."

Psalm 1-2 (NLT)



www.joyinallseasons.com

Jenni Thyng is an engaging, "live out loud" speaker and powerful vocal performer, who shares her passion for the Lord at every opportunity. As an "identity crisis survivor" she uses life lessons, humor, and most importantly scripture, to speak into the hearts of others.

In combining her gift of music together with her excitement in sharing of the Lord's faithfulness through spoken word, she encourages both a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and fellowship together. She is in constant awe of what the Lord accomplishes when we surrender our lives and hearts to Him.

Jenni is no stranger to mishaps, stumbling blocks, judgment, pride...and victory over it all in Jesus Christ!

While always learning more through study and prayer, Jenni is passionate about True Joy and has an urgency to share with others the Hope that only Jesus can give.

THURSDAY

December 5, 2024

Doors open at 5:30 pm

Dinner & Desserts

6 - 6:45 pm

Concert at 7:00 pm

COMMUNITY COVENANT
CHURCH

122 Main Street

Upsala, MN

Please sign up at the Welcome Center
or call the church office by December 1.

*A free will offering will be taken
at the event.

Covenant Women Cookie Sale

7

17th Annual Christmas Cookies By The Pound

Join Covenant Women in presenting one of the most anticipated events of the year - the Christmas Cookie Sale!

Saturday, December 14 from 8:00-11:30 AM.

Fresh caramel rolls & coffee will be available for eating in or taking out.

Specialty items - spritz, lefsa, and prepackaged wrapped trays are available for preorder by calling the church (320) 573-2672.



Individual cookies & bars will be \$12/pound.

Thanks to Thrivent and the Elmdale Creamery for their generous donations in support of this event.



Pre-wrapped cookie trays will be available to purchase for gift giving.

Funds raised will support CW missions including youth, local, and international missions. Thanks be to God!



Dear Community Covenant Women, please be thinking about cookies, candies, or breads that you can donate for sale that day.