



In the Spirit

A newsletter for the Libertyville Covenant church community about local happenings and Christian issues.

January 2022
Volume 29 Issue 1

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Beginning Again

“In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” – John 1

John begins his gospel at the very beginning (sing it with me, “a very good place to start!”) His first word is *geneses*, “In the beginning...”. The exact word that begins the Old Testament as well. While Matthew and Luke begin their story with Jesus’ birth, John is taking us back to the very beginning as he tells his story of Jesus. And, John shares, at the very beginning was a Word. But not just a word. His word here is *logos*, which translates as “meaning” or “representation”, like a company logo, a symbol that represents all that a company is. Jesus is the exact representation of God, His logo as it were. And while we have never seen God, we have seen Jesus. If cameras were invented back then, we could have a photo of Jesus and this photo would capture the Meaning of God.

And just what is the Meaning of God? What is God like? Jesus. “Anyone who has seen me,” Jesus says a few chapters later, “has seen the

(Cont'd on page 2)

2021 CONTRIBUTIONS

The books will be kept open for 2021 until January 2, 2022. If you would like to make a contribution towards your 2021 giving, date your check 12/31/21. Checks mailed in must be received by January 5, 2022. Online giving is cut off on 12/31/21. Please call or email me if you have questions. 224-637-4422 carenvollrath@gmail.com

Caren Vollrath, Financial Secretary

Father.” To know God begins by knowing Jesus. And so our church purposes to help us grow in our knowledge of and relationship with Jesus.

One of our chief ways of knowing Jesus is through the bible, and so every spring we take part in the Immerse Bible Study together. Last year we gathered in groups to read, ask questions about, and discuss “The Beginning”, Genesis through Deuteronomy. This year we are going to read the story of Jesus together, from Matthew through Revelation.

Our hope and goal is to have 70% of our congregation involved in an Immerse Bible Study Group. This means we need 140 of us taking part in a group. Our youth will, and many of our existing small groups will. Our Sunday school class will. But many of us aren’t part of any of these groups. So we want to invite and encourage every one of you to be a part of an Immerse Small Group. The details of these groups can be found in the Immerse article later in this newsletter, but suffice it to say that we are counting on you to find or create a group this year. The reading is only about 10 minutes a day. We spend more time than that flipping aimlessly through social media. What if instead we spent that time getting to know Jesus, who was with God in the beginning and is God’s very Image? Join us on this journey, beginning Jan. 31, and see if your life doesn’t change noticeably for the better.

WORSHIP in January . . .



As we begin our year together in worship, we will be hearing from many different voices all bringing us the Word of God. From Keith Hamilton, president of Alaska Christian College, to Kat Fredrickson, youth pastor at Northbrook Covenant Church, from Pastor Karen Hinz, chaplain at Covenant Living of Northbrook to Pastor Steve, we will be looking together at themes of Light, Peace, Epiphany, Mission, and end with our Immerse Kickoff. Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30am or on our [YouTube channel](#).

Jan. 2	Kat Fredrickson preaching	John 1:1-18
Jan. 9	Pastor Steve preaching	Matt. 2:1-12
Jan. 16	Pastor Karen Hinz preaching	Matt. 5:14-16
Jan. 23	President Keith Hamilton	Greetings from ACC
Jan. 30	Pastor Steve preaching	2 Tim. 3:14-17



Save the Date! March 5th, 9am – 1pm

The Unhurried Retreat is a mostly self-guided time of quiet prayer and contemplation. With stations and activities all over the church, we have a rare opportunity to “be still and know that I am God.” Come to read, pray, walk, color, create, and maybe even get a massage!
Registration will be available in January.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL



Reflections on small group by Beth Hjelm “Pick me!”

As a teacher, I often asked for volunteers in my classes. The inevitable response was, “PICK ME!” often repeated with increasing loudness and urgency!

I’m the first to admit that I don’t respond to most opportunities with the same amount of eagerness and enthusiasm as my students. In fact, I tend to think of all the reasons why it would be best for me to say no at a particular time.

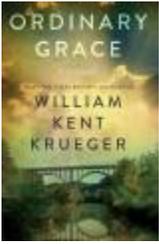
I was fortunate to share the gift of hospitality with my husband. We loved having people to our home for an evening or sharing our space on Hagerman Lake with others. In the past two years, I’ve had to redefine what the gift of hospitality looks like for me going forward as well as consider exploring other gifts and interests.

This journey hasn’t been easy as I’ve encountered roadblocks and several detours. Anxiety, lack of confidence, and loneliness set in. It’s been difficult to be patient and wait for God’s timing. This fall, our small group decided to study and discuss the book, “Finding Your Yes” by Christine E. Wagoner. Ms. Wagoner received her M.A. in Counseling Ministries from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and is an associate regional director with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. If you’re trying to discern where God is calling you to serve, you might find this book helpful in that journey. It offers sound advice regarding how to notice the possibilities instead of the obstacles.

A favorite quote of mine from the book is: “The first layers of reasoning for no may be the first steps in finding a yes. A **journey** that uncovers your desires, gifts and calling. A **process** that brings confidence and clarity. An **experience** that grows your relationship with God and with others so deeply, you wonder how you didn’t encounter this adventure before now.”

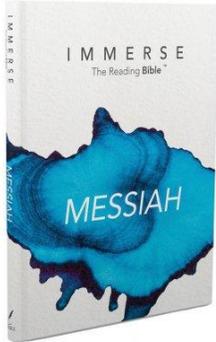
This book study has been helpful to me as I sought to clarify how and where my gifts might be used. It also affirmed some of my thinking and turned other thoughts upside down. A shout out to the group members: Lisa Kindstrom, Chris Anderson, Laura Nordgren and Judy Tanzer! It’s a pleasure to learn, reflect and discuss with these women.

P.S. I’m excited to share that I’ve recently said “yes” to an opportunity that begins in the new year!



Sensible Ladies Small Group

The next selection for book club is Ordinary Grace by William Krueger. Looking back at a tragic event that occurred during his thirteenth year, Frank Drum explores how a complicated web of secrets, adultery, and betrayal shattered his Methodist family and their small 1961 Minnesota community. Our next meeting will be on Friday, January 14, 2022, 7pm at church.



We are preparing for our Immerse reading program which will run from *January 31st through May 22nd* (16 weeks). During this time, we will commit to reading the entire New Testament- Matthew through Revelation – together. There are 5 days (Monday-Friday) of readings (about 4 pages for 10-15 minutes a day of reading time) to be completed at your pace.

5-12 people meet weekly to discuss what was read. These meetings are less like a Bible study but more like a “book club.”

We have three formats of Immerse:

1. Hard copy: A family guide is available [here](#) to use at home for parents, grandparents, or guardians to use with younger children. Click [here](#) for a sixteen-week reading plan.
2. Free MP3 audio: Click [here](#) (once on Immerse website-click “view 16-week audio button)
3. E-book: Purchase through the following vendors: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Christianbook.com](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), [Kobo](#), [Google Play](#)
4. How Can I Participate In A Group?
 1. Join an existing group
 2. Form Your Own “Immerse” Group | If you presently do not belong to any group feel free to start your own group! Gather a group of about five-seven people—friends, neighbors, acquaintances, or colleagues. You can meet at your home, at a coffee shop, over lunch, whenever works for you. You don’t need to know everything to host a group; Immerse has a host guide [here](#)

Click [here](#) to sign up for Immerse stating your preference for groups. Please email Pastor Steve at steve@libcov.org your questions, or call the church office, 847-362-3308.



Each year we focus on a different aspect of our Vision Statement as a church. And though COVID postponed last year's focus, we are finally back and ready to grow together! We've had a year of Discipleship, and a Year of Fellowship. What will this Year be? You'll never guess. Stay tuned at our Annual Meeting on Jan. 30 for our Year of _____ Kickoff!

Youth and Children's Ministries

SENIOR HIGH MINISTRY

January 14th to January 17th : One Life Retreat

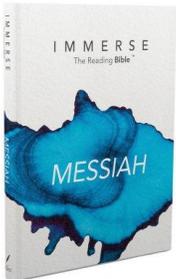
We have close to 40 youth and their youth leaders signed up for a weekend of fun and adventure complete with worship, broomball tournament, polar bear dip, other fun winter activities, a downhill skiing option, spiritual disciplines, and Christ-centered messages!



One Life strives to call students to out of the ordinary to live “one life” of *extra*-ordinary devotion to Christ through shared experiences in solid programming, challenging speakers, and meaningful worship. To help students find strength and renewal of faith on a spiritual peak, and develop a rhythm of faith that sustains them when they are not in those high places. In every way One Life retreats strive to encourage students to live further into their calling to whom God has made them to be and go home affecting their communities for the cause of Christ. For our students, don’t forget to purchase your ONE LIFE t-shirts.

Weekly Senior High Happenings:

- **Sunday School, 9:15 am to 10:15 am. January 9, 23 and 30. We will meet in Fellowship Hall. Sometimes outside, weather permitting.**
- **Youth Group, Sunday, 5:00 pm. to 7:00 pm. January 9 and 23. Dress possibly for outside weather**



The Senior High Sunday Morning Group will be starting “Immerse” bible study at the end of January and goes thru May. The books will be available mid-January for purchase. The cost is \$15 per book. Contact Paul for more information or if a scholarship is needed. We hope that you will be able to join our group on Sunday mornings.

SENIOR HIGH PROGRESSIVE DINNER HIGHLIGHTS

On December 12th, the Senior High had a Progressive Dinner Christmas Party starting with appetizers and an re-enactment of the Christmas Story, fun and fellowship.





MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY

Save the Dates: January 28th to January 30th: Winter Camp Retreat at Covenant Harbor I know this is an



incredibly busy time of year, however, we have an upcoming retreat in January to register for. There are **2 forms** which your student needs to have filled out for registration to be complete. **BOTH need to be done by the 28th of December. If you need help from Pastor Paul, he is only available until the 26th to answer your questions.** After the 26th, he is on vacation until January 4th. It's going to be a great weekend. Hope to see you there!!

Registration: Follow this link to the church website <https://libcov.org/winter-camp-retreat/>

1) fill out this form and submit.

2) Click [here](#). This is the Covenant Harbor Web site. Please make an account, if you have not already done so and fill out the forms that they need from you.

Weekly Middle School Happenings:

- **Confirmation/Sunday School, 9:15 am to 10:15 am. January 9, 16, and 23. There is no Confirmation class on the 30th.**
- **Wednesdays, 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm. Youth Group begins again on January 12th.**

SAVE THE DATES: March 30th (Middle School) and April 27th (High School)

Mission Project for our Youth ministry with PADS. Please save the date to join hands with the Presbyterian church to prepare meals and a place for the homeless to spend a night out of the cold and outside elements. If you are not familiar with PADS, click [here](#) and see how PADS impacts the homeless in so many helpful ways.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRESSIVE DINNER HIGHLIGHTS



CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES



**Children's Ministry Winter Camp at Covenant Harbor:
January 14-16**

Our once a month gathering for our children is the Winter Camp for grades 3-6th which gives elementary students the opportunity to have a fun and engaging weekend designed for younger students specifically. Just like our Jr. and Sr. High Winter Camps, this weekend includes all the details of activities, food, lodging and the Christian speaker and worship leaders. Our goal is for students and leaders to leave the weekend knowing more about Jesus and feeling more connected to each other in community. Be sure to reach out to Debbie Tometz in the office with any questions. Click [here](#) to register.

Every Sunday plan to experience offerings for children of all ages:

- Children’s Sunday School (9:15 to 10:15)
 - Any age thru 4 years old (Drop off at Nursery by the Office on Main floor)
 - 5 years of age through 5th grade (Meets downstairs)
- Children’s Church (Will be dismissed midway through the service. Meet teachers at back doors)
 - 5 years of age through 5th grade Scott, Luke and Max Anderson will be leading all of October.
- Nursery (On main level next to Church Office)
 - Offered during Sunday School and the Worship Service



Happy New Year!!!! But it’s not the new year that starts on January 1st I am speaking of. For the followers of Jesus, the new year begins with Advent. What a beginning it is as we start by looking to the very end of the age and the second coming of Christ. Our hope, joy, love, and peace found not under a tree rather swaddled in a manger. During this season we are reminded of that first Christmas; the moment grace came to us in the person of Jesus. This advent season that rolls into Christmas tide, my prayer is that God’s grace meets us where we need it most.

We will take a short pause in youth ministry for Christmas break and look forward to a fresh start together January 9th. We would love for all of you to be part of a wonderful winter and spring that we have been preparing at Libertyville Covenant Church. Our youth ministry is celebrating a group of almost 40 people will attend the One Life Retreat at Covenant Point Bible Camp January 14-17th!! We also are anticipating a larger group for our middle school retreat at Covenant Harbor January 28-30th. If you haven’t registered your students for the retreats we urge you to do so before December 28th!! We believe that this ministry is a place to start afresh and start a new and deeper relationship with God.

In January, we will invite our youth ministry to read through the Immerse bible “Messiah” January 31-May 22nd (16 weeks). While reading through the immerse bible section “Beginnings” in 2021, our students grew in their knowledge, faith, and excitement for God and His word. Many families read together weekly and great discussions took place where questions could be asked and a sense of wonder was encouraged. In many cases these discussions provided great starting places for our bible studies Sunday Mornings. We would like to

invite you to prayerfully consider reading through “Messiah” together as a family starting January 31st. We hope you will join us.

May the year ahead be filled with praise on our lips as the angels cried out, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rest.”-Luke 2:14 May God’s favor rest upon you and give you peace and reason for great joy as our savior Jesus lives. May this news bring you the assurances, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord”-Luke 2-10 Looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the year ahead and am grateful to be on this journey with all of you. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

Pastor Paul Couleur

ADOPT-A-FAMILY Thank you to all who contributed to the Adopt a Family gift program. Your generosity was immensely appreciated by all who received gifts and surely put a smile on each child’s face. The warehouse was filled with gifts, serving 8,000 needy people in Lake County. Thank you again for sharing God’s love this Christmas season!



Financial Summary thru November 2021

EXPENSES VS. BUDGET

Budgeted Expenses YTD	\$521,732
Actual Expenses YTD	\$482,079
Cost Savings / (Overrun)	\$39,653

GIVING VS. BUDGET

Giving YTD (Including spec)	\$490,470
Budgeted Giving YTD	\$521,734
Giving Surplus / (Deficit)	(\$31,264)

INCOME VS. EXPENSES

Income YTD	\$490,470
Expenses YTD	\$482,079
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	\$8,391

[LINK to online giving](#)

Checks mailed to the church will also be received and processed on a regular basis. If you have questions, contact Caren & Lee Vollrath at carenvollrath@gmail.com or 847/549-6906

The Leadership Team thanks you all for your continued generous support of the ministries of LCC. We thank God for you and His good work that can be accomplished through your faithfulness. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our finances, please contact our Treasurer, "Kansas" Dave Anderson at 847-910-1696 or danderson@proactiongroup.com.

Thanks, Dave for your work on our behalf!

LCC LEADERSHIP

Please pray for the church **LEADERSHIP TEAM, COUNCIL & STAFF,**

Contact them if you have questions, ideas or would like to get involved in a particular ministry.

STAFF:

Pastor: Steve Larson (815/508-4450)

Associate Pastor to Youth:

Paul Couleur (847/331-3640)

Pastor to Senior Adults:

Bruce Thorson (847/421-2732)

Offices\ Administrator: Debbie Tometz

Choir Director:

Kris Nikkel

Building Manager:

Dan Doherty

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Church Council Chair:

Paul Lundstedt

Church Council Vice Chair:

Church Council Secretary:

Karen Lundstedt

Treasurer:

Dave L. Anderson

LT Members at Large:

Jill Heath

Kirk Johnson

Financial Secretary:

Lee & Caren Vollrath

Christian Education and Discipleship (CED)

Deacons Team:

Wes Lindahl

Evangelism & Service Team:

Trevor James

Worship Ministry Team:

Michelle Pas

Finance & Properties Team:

Kerry Monson

DEACONS



Columbarium Report

Deacons have been working to develop a columbarium proposal. The details are now ready and we'll be presenting for approval by the congregation at the annual meeting next month. I've included a rendering of what it might look like outside the east door of the church and next to the garden.

What is a columbarium? A place to store ashes from deceased church members and family. Surrounding area should be a peaceful place for prayer and reflection on the lives of those departed. We plan to also have a memorial wall for names without ashes stored. The Deacons consider this a ministry to the congregation.

Where would the place be located? Near to the current garden. See the rendering.

Would it cost a lot of money? Around \$54,000. The costs would be covered by those planning to use the spaces for family members. The cost would be approximately \$2,000 - \$3,000 per niche and \$400 -- \$500 for a memorial plaque. From our research of several other churches, there would be net additional positive dollars to the church as time goes on. To get started, we'd like to have at least half the money in advance.

Is there interest? We're gathering information, but currently looks like around a dozen people are interested to some degree.

What is the approval process? The proposal is completed and approved by the Council. Now we'll present to the congregation for final approval. Thank you for taking the survey. Please complete the survey below before 1/5/22. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R6J578T>



January Birthdays		January Anniversaries
4 Jerry Junas	24 Beth Enquist	7 Art and Kris Nikkel (1984)
7 Paul Couleur	25 Donna Clark	
11 Britta Cochran	26 Katy Albers	
17 Bonnie Wachta	27 Dan Doherty, Deb Lindahl	
18 Beth Hjelm, Lennon Schau	29 Marilyn Murray, Jeanne Couleur	
19 John Hawkins, Marleigh Schau	30 Kat Tranel	
21 Chris Anderson		

January Volunteer Schedule

Date	Coffee Hour	Lay Reader	Greeters	Ushers
1/2/2022	Scott and Julie Dahlberg	Sophia Pas	Greg and Kristy Miller	Carol and Dennis Dieball
1/9/2022	Jim and Michelle Pas	Kirk Johnson	Paul and Claudia Nauman	Carol and Dennis Dieball
1/16/2022	Bob and Martha Peterson	Laura Nordgren	Art and Kris Nikkel	Carol and Dennis Dieball
1/23/2022	Pauline Raia & Angela Kocinski	Paul Hawkinson	John and Suzy Nelson	Carol and Dennis Dieball
1/30/2022	Nate and Melissa Schau	Maggie Johnson	Al and Carol Nielson	Carol and Dennis Dieball
Date	Sunday School	Children's Church	Sunday School Nursery	Worship Nursery
1/2/2022				
1/9/2022	Jim Gillette	Jim Gillette		Kat Tranel
1/16/2022	Jim Gillette	Jim Gillette		Caren Vollrath and Ann Frost
1/23/2022		Paul Hawkinson		Nancy Borkman
1/30/2022		Paul Hawkinson		Kirsten P & Karin H

January

Recurring Weekly Events

Sunday: 9:15 Sunday School for all Ages
10:30 Worship
12:00 Choir
5:00 p.m. High School Youth Group

Monday: 7:00 p.m. Larson's SG
7:00 p.m. NA

Tuesday: 1st Tuesday: 7:00 p.m. Youth Life Capeneum
2nd Tuesday: 7:00 p.m. Worship Ministry Team
3rd Tuesday: 5:30 p.m. Leadership Team
4th Tuesday: 7:00 p.m. Deacons

Wednesday: 9:30 Nauman SG
6:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group
6:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting

Thursday: 9:15 Women's SG
6:30 p.m. Racial Righteousness SG
1st /3rd Thursday 7:00 p.m. Men's Ping Pong

Friday: 7:00 Men's SG

Saturday: 1st Saturday Furniture Ministry
2nd/4th Saturday 9:30 Kindstrom SG

January Special Events

1/14	Sensible Ladies Small Group
1/14-16	Children's Winter Retreat (Covenant Harbor)
1/14-17	Senior High Winter Retreat (Covent Point)
1/28-30	Middle School Winter Retreat (Covenant Harbor)
1/30	Annual Meeting
1/31	Immerse Bible Study Begins

January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship	3 7:00 pm NA	4 7:00 pm Capenium	5 9:30 am Nauman SG	6 9:15 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Racial Righteousness 7:00 pm Ping Pong	7 7:00 am Men's Bible Study	8 9:30 Small Group (zoom)
9 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Practice 5:00 Sr Hi Youth Group	10 7:00 pm NA	11 7:00 pm WMT	12 9:30 Nauman SG 6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group resumes	13 9:15 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Racial Righteousness	14 7:00 am Men's Bible Study ONE LIFE RETREAT	15 ONE LIFE RETREAT
16 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Practice ONE LIFE RETREAT	17 ONE LIFE RETREAT 7:00 pm NA	18 6:30 pm Leadership	19 9:30 Nauman SG 6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group	20 9:15 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Racial Righteousness 7:00 pm Ping Pong	21 7:00 am Men's Bible Study	22 9:30 am Small Group (zoom)
23 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Practice 5:00 Sr Hi Youth Group	24 7:00 pm NA	25 7:00 pm Deacons	26 9:30 Nauman SG 6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group	27 9:15 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Racial Righteousness	28 7:00 am Men's Bible Study	29
30 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12:00 Annual Mtg. 5:00 Sr Hi Youth Group	31 7:00 pm Larson SG 7:00 pm NA					

Our Mission is...

to grow disciples, to grow the church, and to grow the Kingdom of God.

Our Vision is ...

We grow disciples as we praise and learn together

We grow the church as we love and give together

We grow the Kingdom of God as we serve and share together

Our Core Values are....

Community: everyone is welcome to join us on the journey

Authenticity: being real people with real issues before our real God.

Relationships: with God, each other and the world around us

Engagement: all are gifted, all are called, all have a place in the ministry

To contact Pastor Steve:
Phone or Text: 815-508-4450
Email: steve@libcov.org
For late night emergencies
please call: 815-508-4450
For family emails:
halfadozenlarsons@gmail.com



The Evangelical Covenant Church affirms the centrality of the scriptures, with emphasis upon the grace of God. Covenanters also have a tradition of freedom that accepts a diversity of backgrounds and doctrinal positions, while maintaining a common unity in Christ. The Covenant has often been called a Family of Faith. Our congregational life indicates that this is an apt description.

[Smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) donates to LCC!
If you shop through Amazon.com, use Smile.Amazon.com instead and designate LCC as the charity on the opening screen. Then, at no extra cost to you, a small percentage of all you spend will be donated back to LCC to support our youth! LCC recently received a **check of \$46.40 from AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile's Impact: \$303.28 to LCC YTD**

NOTES:



Libertyville Covenant Church

250 S. St. Mary's Road, Libertyville, Illinois 60048

(Corner of Route 176 and St. Mary's Road)

Pastor: Steve Larson

Church phone: 847/362-3308 Fax: 847/362-3310

www.libcov.org