



In the Spirit

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

January 2024
Volume 31 Issue 1

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Intend Blessing



For decades I've been getting the getting the periodical *Pietisten*. While not a Covenant publication, *Pietisten* is thoroughly Pietist and draws much of its identity from the Evangelical Covenant Church, including its authors, mood, and staff. I have friends who write for and others who lead this endeavor. And while I don't always agree with everything written, I read every issue cover to cover. In fact, the fact that I DON'T agree with everything is one thing that brings me back issue after issue.

The first of *Pietisten's* stated Premises is simple: "To intend blessing". This simple three-word statement sums up the magazine's purpose – to intend blessing for all who read it. This also sums up the call to the Christian living in this world – to intend blessing for everyone with whom we have contact. In fact, this was one of the first stated purposes God gave as He created a people for Himself in Gen. 12:3, "I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; **and all people on earth with be blessed through you.**" As God's people today, we are to intend blessing for "all people on earth".

Sadly, I don't see this in God's people today. Oh, perhaps individually we intend blessing for our family, our friends, and maybe our church. But all people on earth? I'm not seeing it. I see a lot of Christians allowing their political views to trump their identities as Children of God. I see a lot of congregations seeking to lure people into joining them primarily for what they can bring to the congregation rather than how the congregation can bless them. I see denominations at war with themselves because they don't trust each other. And I continue to see people cursing others, mocking others, hurting others, and too often in the name of God. I'm not seeing a lot of intended blessing.

This year promises to be more of the same, but with the heat turned up to 11. This year's presidential battle is going to increase the volume, the pressure, and the loss of faith in each other as well as God. So this year is the year when we as Christians can change the world. When everyone else is trying to tear the "other side" down, whether that is political, theological, or interpersonal, we can be different by intending blessing in all we do, say, and post. When the darkness grows as it promises to this year, the light of Christ has the opportunity to shine even brighter.

What would it look like for every one of us to make a pact that this year, no matter what, we will intend blessing in every relationship, every word spoken

or written, and every assumption we make? What if we were to hold each other accountable to intend blessing? What if we stopped before we spoke or posted or made a decision and asked, “Do I intend blessing for all people on earth through this, or am I just angry, or trying to prove I’m right, or just trying to bless my own side?”

Imagine a 2024 where blessing spread from LCC out into this community and from there out into the world. Imagine if we stopped arguments rather than joining them, responded with gentleness and love in our conversations rather than mockery and anger, and shared the love of Jesus not as a stake in the ground marking Our Side, but as an offer of blessing to the world around us. Imagine people asking what’s going on with you because you’ve changed this year, and then you have the chance to tell them about Jesus and how He intended blessing in everything He did.

What might your world be like if you did the hard work in 2024 of Intending Blessing?



Church attendance in the US is dropping precipitously. Our world doesn’t see the church as relevant or helpful. So this January, we begin the new year with a reminder of Why Church? Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30am in the sanctuary or on our [YouTube channel](#) (but preferably in the sanctuary!)

Jan. 7	We Trust our Belovedness (Advent wrapup)	Luke 3:21-22
Jan. 14	Called to Follow	John 1:43-51
Jan. 21	Called to Grow	Mark 1:14-20
Jan. 28	Called to Action	Mark 1:21-28

Fellowship



food.faith.fellowship - LCC FUN!

Coffee Hour: The 2024 Year Sign Up sheet through May is available in the narthex. Please contact Christy James, Heather Larson or the office if you have questions.

Smorgasbord Fun

Thank you to Kris Nikkel and everyone who helped make this Fellowship event a success!!



Smorgasbord Fellowship

Mission of the Month



The Evangelism and Service Team invites you to join us for a Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) packing event **Saturday, January 20th, at 4:30pm**, at their site just down the road from church. This is a great opportunity to invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join us in making sure that no child goes hungry and also hears the good news of Jesus.

The team wants to share a 2-minute video with you about a little 19-month-old girl in Uganda who was malnourished. She was being cared for by her great-grandmother, who hadn't even named her because she expected the child to die. Instead, she got food packed by FMSC volunteers paid for by FMSC donors. At the end of the video, you can see what only two months of food, one-half box of manna packs, did for this child. She now has a name: Jascent. We have the great privilege of being part of this transformation by joining FMSC in this work. <https://youtu.be/ZU90SLEsPYQ>

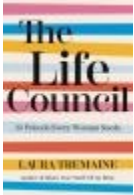
Please put a block on your calendar for this day Click [HERE](#) to Sign-Up on FMSC's website under Libertyville Church or call/email Debbie in the office, to reserve your spot. If you cannot come, or would like to help financially as well, you can donate on the FMSC website, or on our church website, clearly designating it for FMSC.

Thank you for being invested in caring for the least of these, being the hands and feet of Jesus, and a source of hope for those who suffer from hunger! We hope to have a celebratory meal together after the packing event; stay tuned for more info!

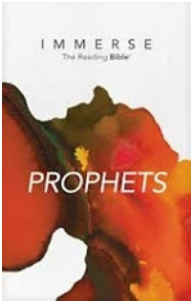


Save the Date! February 17th, 9am – 1pm

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.



The next reading selection for the Sensible Ladies Book Club will be The Life Council: 10 Friends Every Woman Needs, by Laura Tremaine. Come join us for what is sure to be a great discussion! Friday, January 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm at LCC. Questions? Contact Caren Vollrath at 224-637-4422. *Offering a path for a new way to think about friendships, The Life Council will inspire and equip u to be a better friend, make new friends, and appreciate how different types of friendships can bring a richness to your life like never before.*



IMMERSE: THE PROPHETS

We are preparing for our Immerse reading program which will run from *February 4- May 19* (16 weeks). During this time, we will look at the writings of the Old Testament Prophets. 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 own pace. We will once again have Immerse Small Groups, 5-12 people meeting weekly to discuss what was read. These meetings are less like a Bible study but more like a “book club.” More information will be forth coming.

Membership

Church Membership Class – April 21 After Church

Anyone interested in exploring membership at Libertyville Covenant Church is invited to a special class and lunch following the worship service. We will gather for a sub-sandwich meal and then proceed to the class session. If you are interested, please contact either me or one of our pastors – Pastor Steve or Pastor Paul– to let them know you are planning to attend. Welcome! *Wes Lindahl, Deacon Chair*

Youth Ministries



BENEATH THE SURFACE: A 4-Week Series from the Gospels on Identity.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Who do you think you are? You might define your identity by the things people see on the surface — like your style, your look, your abilities, or your reputation. Those things might have something to do with who you are, but they don’t quite capture the whole picture, do they? For each of us, there is always so much more to who we are beneath the surface. But who are we, really? How can we discover who God made us to be? And how can following Jesus shape who we're becoming? In this four-week series, we'll look at four moments from the early years of Jesus' life. As we do, we'll see how God helps us discover who we're becoming and how God's words help us discover who we are. We'll also learn how the right relationships help us discover how to grow and how Jesus helps us discover purpose.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year LCC!!

What a great year in youth ministry here at LCC!! We closed out the year with some really fun progressive dinner parties where laughter, joy, and voices filled the room with all sorts of Christmas cheer. Thank you to all the families that opened their homes and provided space for joy and hope that to fill your homes. When Joseph and Mary were seeking a place fitting for the King of Kings to be born, some reflected to this couple there is no space for you here. Mary and Joseph found hospitality and invitation extended to them in some unlikely ways. It wasn't the most comfortable of scenarios for this couple and yet it was a place set apart for such a time that would be filled with such meaning for one and all. My hopes are that we might recognize that God invites us to create space and place for the Lord to dwell among each and all. Might this Christ child be welcomed into your homes and fill them with the joy and hope that is the light of the word. In Luke Chapter 2 God's marvelous story Christ coming is a hope filled message that includes a future hope that he will return once again. Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel. We hope that you will continue to connect as families over Christmas break and prepare for the great offerings that are planned for youth ministry in 2024.

*Merry Christmas friends,
Pastor Paul Couleur*



Junior High January Programming

*(Confirmation) Sunday School Dates and Times: 1/7, 1/14 and 1/28 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. No SS 1/21
Wednesday Youth Group Dates: 1/10 (6:00 to 7:30 p.m.), 1/17 and 1/24(6:30 to 7:45 p.m.) NO YG 1/3*



Winter Retreat January 19-21 at Covenant Harbor!!

By now everyone should have registered directly with Covenant Harbor. CH closed registration on December 29th. Some highlights of the weekend will be listening to Jeff Root, Pastor at Glen Ellyn Covenant Church will be the weekend's speaker and entertainment will be provided by Divine Resonance, God's Glorifying Midwest Alt-Rock band. If you haven't already done so, please send your payment of \$183 to the office or on-line at libcov.org/give. If a \$50 rebate or scholarship is needed, please contact Pastor Paul. We look

forward to spending this time with you.

Senior High January Programming

Sunday School Dates and Times: 1/7, 1/14, 1/21 and 1/28 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Youth Group Dates: 1/7, 1/14, 1/21 and 1/28 from 5:00 p.m.

ONE LIFE RETREAT: February 16th thru Monday, February 19th. Come for a weekend of fun and adventure with your high school youth group: complete with worship, broomball tournament, polar bear dip, other fun winter activities, a downhill skiing option (Sunday), spiritual disciplines, and Christ-centered messages!



TO REGISTER:

- Go to Covenant Point’s online registration at cpbc.campbrainregistration.com.
- Be sure they know to Choose One Life 2024 session #2, February 16 - 19 and Libertyville Covenant Church
- Cost per student is \$165. If skiing is an option for your student, the cost will be \$40 ski pass only (student bring own equipment), OR \$50 for pass and rental. Payment will be made directly to LCC via check or online. Continue all the way to the screen that’s “Step 5: Review...” where you’ll hit the blue “Submit application” button to finish
- Online registration must be completed before January 16th.

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING: Spending Sunday skiing or snowboarding at **Ski Brule** is a program option for this retreat for an additional fee. CPBC gets discounted group rates for lift tickets and ski/snowboard rental. See this year’s ski rates above. Helmets are required by One Life policy and come with rental equipment. A rental/release ski form will be sent out prior to the retreat weekend and must be filled out by a parent or guardian. If any of your students plan to go to the ski hill, a chaperone must accompany them and provide transportation and supervision while at the hill. If some students remain at CPBC they also require supervision for an adult leader. **Ski/Snowboard Rental Form and Waiver – All skiers and snowboarders should fill out the form prior to coming.** We’ll collect them on Saturday morning and the Ski Brule option will take place on Sunday. Ski forms and payment are due to CPBC (from youth leaders) during Saturday morning of the retreat.

Packing List:

- Bedding
- Winter Clothing
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Swimsuit for sauna
- Bible
- Notebook and pen
- Camera
- Flashlight

Do Not Bring:

- Cell phone or electronic devices
- Knives/ weapons of any kind
- Alcohol/ tobacco/ illegal drugs
- Personal sports equipment
- Valuable personal items



Finance

Giving through November 2023

EXPENSES VS. BUDGET

Budgeted Expenses	\$ 513,087
Actual Expenses	<u>469,050</u>
Cost Savings / (Overrun)	44,037

INCOME VS. BUDGET

Regular Giving	431,522
Special Income	<u>21,578</u>
Total Income	453,100
Budgeted Giving	<u>513,087</u>
Giving Excess / (Shortfall)	(59,987)

INCOME VS. EXPENSES

Actual Income	453,100
Actual Expenses	<u>469,050</u>
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u><u>(\$15,950)</u></u>

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!

[LINK to online giving](#)

Checks mailed to the church will also be received and processed on a regular basis. If you have questions, contact John Bethancourt, jbcovenant@gmail.com or 847/837-1690

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)

Office Administrator: Debbie Tometz

Choir Director: Kris Nikkel

Tech Coordinator: Noah James

Organist: Su-Yi Su

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Church Council Chair:

Caren Vollrath

Church Council Vice Chair:

Dave Anderson

Church Council Secretary:

Karen Lundstedt

Treasurer:

Dave L. Anderson

LT Members at Large:

Julie Dahlberg

Dennis Dieball

Owen Youngman

Financial Secretary:

John Bethancourt

Christian Education and Discipleship (CED)

Angela Kocinski/Ann Frost

Deacon Team:

Wes Lindahl

Evangelism & Service Team:

Teresa Anderson

Worship Ministry Team:

Trevor James

Finance & Properties Team:

Kerry Monson

Connections Team:

Heather Larson

Christy James

January Volunteer Schedule

Date	Coffee Hour	Lay Reader	Greeters	Ushers
1/7		Sophia Pas	Tim & Christie Albers	Carol and Dennis Dieball
1/14	Ann and Dan Frost	Maggie Johnson	Bill & Chris Anderson	Same
1/21		Paul Hawkinson	Dave & Barb Anderson	Same
1/28		Kirk Johnson	Bill & Marti Anderson	Same
Date	Sunday School			Worship Nursery
11/7	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd : Jim Gillette, 4-5: Sarah Palmberg			
1/14	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd : Jim Gillette, 4-5: Sarah Palmberg			Ann Frost
1/21	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd : Paul and Karin Lundstedt, 4-5: Merileen Thorson			Caren Vollrath
1/28	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd Paul and Karin Lundstedt, 4-5: Merileen Thorson			Kirsten Peterson & Karin Hildebrandt

January Events

- 7 Senior High Youth Group begins
- 10 Junior High Youth Group begins
- 12 Sensible Ladies Book Group
- 17 Wednesday Night Together begins
- 19-21 Jr. High Winter Retreat
- 20 FMSC Packing Event/Dinner

Mark Your Calendars for February

- 14 Ash Wednesday
- 16-19 Sr. High One Life Retreat

Libertyville Covenant Church
 250 S. St. Mary's Road, Libertyville, Illinois 60048
 Pastor: Steve Larson, Church phone: 847-362-3308
www.libcov.org

January Birthdays/Anniversaries

January Birthdays		Anniversaries
1/7 Paul Couleur	1/21 Chris Anderson	1/7/1984 Kris and Art Nikkel
1/11 Joshua Hickok	1/26 Katie Albers Donna Clark	
1/17 Bonnie Wachta	1/27 Dan Doherty Deb Lindahl	
1/18 Beth Hjelm Lennon Schau	1/29 Jeanne Couleur	
1/19 John Hawkins Marleigh Schau	1/30 Sharon Johnson Kat Tranel	

Recurring Weekly Events

Sunday	9:00 Sunday School 9:00 Adult Bible Study 9:00 Women's Small Group 10:30 a.m. Worship 12:00 Choir Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group
Monday	7:00 p.m. Monday Night Small Group
Tuesday	7:00 p.m. 2 nd week Worship Ministry Team 4 th week Deacon Mtg /4 th week Christian Education and Discipleship Mtg. (Zoom)
Wednesday	5:30 Wednesday Night Together 6:30 Jr. High Youth Group
Thursday	9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 4:00 p.m. 3 rd Leadership Mtg. 1 st /3 rd /5 th week 7:00 p.m. Men's Ping Pong
Friday	7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study
Saturday	8:00 a.m. Furniture Ministry (1 st Sat)



ONLINE GIVING PORTAL: To give online, simply to go the LCC website (www.libcov.org) and click the “give” on the menu. Thank you for your ongoing support.

January

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 9:30 Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm Ping Pong Group	5 7:00 Men's Bible Study	6 8:00 Furniture Ministry
7 9:00 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Rehear. 5:00 pm SR High Youth Group	8 7:00 Mon. Small Group	9 6:30 WMT mtg	10 6:30 JR High YG	11 9:30 Women's Bible Study	12 7:00 Men's Bible Study 7:00 Book Club	13
14 9:00 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Rehear. 5:00 pm SR High Youth Group	15 7:00 Mon. Small Group	16	17 5:30 WNT 6:30 JR High YG	18 9:30 Women's Bible Study 4:00 Leadership 7:00 pm Ping Pong Group	19 Jr High Retreat 7:00 Men's Bible Study	20 Jr. High Retrea 4:30 FMSC
21 Jr. High Ret 9:00 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Rehear. 5:00 pm SR High Youth Group	22 7:00 Mon. Small Group	23 7:00 Deacon Mtg	24 5:30 WNT 6:30 JR High YG	25 9:30 Women's Bible Study	26 7:00 Men's Bible Study	27
28 9:00 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Rehear. 5:00 pm SR High Youth Group	29 7:00 Mon. Small Group	30 7:00 CED Mtg	31 5:30 WNT 6:30 JR High YG			