

# 2019-2020 PASTOR'S LETTER

## First Covenant Church of Saint Paul



**17** Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,

**18** yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will be joyful in God my Savior.      Habakkuk 3:17-18

The year appears to be split in half. The fall began with our commitment to seeking a way beyond the divisiveness of “us” vs. “them” as we sought our unity in Jesus Christ. We collectively read through the book of Galatians in November and then prepared to celebrate Christ’s birth in December. As 2020 began, we continued to courageously “follow the roadmap” to prayerfully and faithfully discern as a community where God is leading us, especially in our understanding of human sexuality. The first Sunday in March we celebrated Pastor Ted Nordlund’s significant ministry among us as visitation pastor as he headed into retirement (as would our custodian, Jon Hugger, later in April). The weekend of March 6-8 we were entertained and inspired by the production of “Aladdin” at the Johnson High School auditorium, performed by a cast of energetic and talented young people. I could feel the momentum. I was encouraged to continue pursuing what lie ahead for us.

And then the Coronavirus came to the US and life as we knew it stopped.

We could no longer worship in person. Who’s ever heard of churches closing their doors? Teachers could no longer educate their students in person. College students were told they had to return home--with little warning. Who’s ever heard of schools closing their doors? We could no longer visit our loved ones in senior living or at the hospital. Funerals and memorial services were limited to ten attendees--held only outside at the cemetery. We waited in long grocery lines, or had our groceries delivered--rarely getting all the items on our grocery lists, because the stores were not able to stock the shelves like they used to...especially with toilet paper. And all of this while wearing masks when outside our homes. Even if someone had warned us of what lie ahead in 2020, I doubt any of us would have believed them. We felt the desolation and despair the prophet Habakkuk describes in the opening Scripture passage.

It didn’t happen overnight. But in hindsight, the re-grouping, the re-calibrating to a new normal happened amazingly fast. Members of our ministry team learned new skills, developed new ways for drawing the congregation together. Each week we made improvements in how we planned and executed online worship as we sought to find “peace in the wilderness” through our shared faith in the One who is our Peace.

Zoom went from being a video conferencing tool that few of us ever used to becoming an everyday necessity for how we do life. Amidst the exhaustion of daily living with uncertainty and fear, spring came to Minnesota. Most of us could now go on walks, maybe even gather with family or friends we hadn’t seen in a few months in a socially distanced, safe way outside. The warmer weather, budding leaves, the signs of new life offered that extra boost we so desperately needed.

And then George Floyd was killed at the knee of a Minneapolis police officer on the Monday of Memorial Weekend. And life as we knew it, stopped yet again.

People took to the street in peaceful protest that turned to looting and rioting, destroying businesses and livelihoods in our Twin Cities. The pain and anger was palpable as the realities of racial injustice exploded far beyond Minnesota causing protests and unrest to spread throughout the world. Not that racial disparities and inequities were anything new--but this blatant abuse of power captured on cell phones and broadcast throughout the world triggered something that could not be squelched. It brought to the forefront the lives of countless men and women of color who have been killed by police officers in our country and justice has not been served.

As we sought to make sense of it all, the ministry team was already preparing a worship series focused on the spiritual practice of lament. We thought it appropriate for life amidst a pandemic. Little did we know that we would be lamenting about so much more. And so we collectively cried out to God--for mercy, justice, peace and hope--and for God's Spirit to lead us courageously forward in being the church, even when we were not in the building.

Our program year came to an end with time at the "Oasis"--and oh, how we needed this place of spiritual refreshment. We gathered in person for our first outdoor worship service in July. Admittedly, it was different. Sitting in spray painted socially distanced squares on the south lawn; limited singing; wearing masks out in the hot sun. But for those of us who felt safe enough to gather together, we collectively found joy and strength in God our Savior--just like Habbakuk states.

The events of 2020 have reminded us of just how little we can actually control. We're waiting for a safe and effective vaccine to be developed so that we can "go back to normal"--even as we know "normal" is illusive. In the midst of all this uncertainty and stress we hold onto what we know about the God who loves us with an everlasting love, who does not run from adversity but sent His only Son to enter into the very center of our chaos and fear to bring us peace, hope, and love. We know God sent the Holy Spirit who empowers us with courage to keep discovering what it means to be the church for this time and space.

Maybe it was at least in part because of this strange space we found ourselves in that helped our ministry team and leadership team to find greater clarity in defining First Covenant Church of Saint Paul's "identity, mission and vision". (See below.) We are confident these statements will guide us forward as we continue to seek to be the church God desires us to be--for God's good and God's glory.

Pastor Anne

### IDENTITY

what it means to **belong** at First Covenant Church

We are a church deeply rooted in the Gospel and our local community who courageously:

- pursues hope, justice, and freedom in Christ,
- extends grace and love to a broken and divided world, and
- invites all people to encounter the Living God.

### MISSION

what we **believe** about life together at First Covenant Church

We seek to authentically live into our identity in Christ, empowered by the Spirit to embody

THE LOVE OF GOD AND

A the hope of the Gospel locally and globally.

### VISION

what will **become** because of First Covenant Church's identity and mission

We will see justice, mercy, and reconciliation by receiving and extending the transforming peace (*shalom*) of Christ.

LOVE AND



2019-2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

First Covenant Church of Saint Paul

Key: Worship Theme Personnel Change Roadmap Event significant local or global event

## SEPTEMBER 2019

9.1 | Pastor Mike Hotz, Pastor of Community Life's installation and Addin Vang, Associate Minister of Youth and Family's farewell

9.8 | Rising Beyond: Us vs. Them

## OCTOBER 2019

10.29 | Audra Field, Director of Administration, farewell

## NOVEMBER 2019

11.1 | Galatians: An Invitation to "We" all church memorization of Galatians 5:22-23

## DECEMBER 2019

12.1 | What Are WE Waiting For?

## JANUARY 2020

1.5 | Reconciling Grace

## FEBRUARY 2020

2.6 | Juan Perez, Custodian, farewell.

2.12 | Tony Cook, Custodian, begins. Chuck Feske, begins as temporary custodian.

2.26 | Pause

Welcome Sunday and Block Party | 9.8

"Covenant Freedom as Spiritual Practice" weekend with Dr. Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom | 9.14-15

80+ Birthday Party | 10.4

Team World Vision Twin Cities Marathon | 10.6

Dr. Chris Gehrz guest preacher and Spiritual Growth Hour (SGH): "Reformation Lessons for Life Together Today" | 10.27

Broadway Dinner Night VII \$4,232 raised for musicals at a sold out show! | 11.8

Seeking Biblical Answers to Climate Change SGH by the Sustainability Team | 11.10

Seeking Biblical Answers to Immigration SGHs with: Bob Oehrig (Arrive Ministries), Karla Hult (Kare 11), and Jonathan House residents | 11.17 + 24

Congregational Forum congregational survey released | 12.1

Youth musical "Aladdin Jr." rehearsals begin | 12.4

Giving Christmas Away 752 gifts of toys, clothing, and necessities were given to 110 children from First Covenant, Family Values for Life, and Farnsworth Aerospace Schools, wrapped by 12 volunteer elves through your generosity. | 12.18

Children's Christmas Program (preK - 6th grades): "Crazy, Busy, Peaceful, Holy Night" | 12.22

Candlelight Christmas Eve worship service | 12.24

Enneagram Training for Children, Youth, and After School Program volunteers | 1.4

MLK Jr. Partner Worship Service and Potluck | 1.19

Healthy Human Sexuality: Becky Patton, LMFT | 1.24

Leadership Workshop on Identity, Mission, & Vision with Annie Perdue-Olson for Ministry & Leadership Teams | 2.1

Congregational Survey Update | 2.7

Trailblazer Retreat (3rd - 5th grades) at Covenant Pines Bible Camp | 2.14-16

Confirmation Retreat (7th - 8th grades) at Mount Olivet Retreat Center | 2.16-17

Theological Perspectives on Same Gendered Relationships with Dr. Kyle Roberts & Dr. Peter Kaspner | 2.20

AC Retreat at Adventurous Christians | 2.21-23

Ash Wednesday worship service | 2.26

## MARCH 2020

3.1 | Pastor Ted Nordlund, Visitation Pastor, retirement celebration.

3.13 | Gov. Walz declares Peacetime State of Emergency in response to COVID-19.

3.15 | Gov. Walz orders temporary school closures.

Respectful Conversations with Kim Olstad | 3.1

Aladdin Jr. performances at Johnson High School | 3.6-8

Saint Paul Federation of Educators goes on strike. FCC opens doors and space for educators to gather and stay warm. | 3.10-12

FCC's Leadership Team closes building and moves worship online in response to COVID-19.. | 3.12

FCC gathers for our first ever virtual worship service. Community Care groups are formed. | 3.15

Youth Group (7th - 12th graders) begins meeting on Zoom weekly on Thursdays. | 3.26

## APRIL 2020

Wednesday morning Bible study begins meeting online. G2G (Generation to Generation) kicks off. G2G links families to homebound FCC members to provide connection and care during COVID-19. | 4.2

FCC celebrates Holy Week entirely online. **Mundy Thursday** is a pre-recorded service of communion and remembrance in the home. **Good Friday** pivots from a live concert to a YouTube premier of the 2014's "For Such A One As This." Easter flowers are distributed to homebound and others by care captains & Ministry Team members. **Easter Sunday** provides opportunities to connect face to face with our first Zoom Fellowship Time. | 4.5-12

4.19 | Peace in the Wilderness

4.25 | Jon Hugger, Lead Custodian, retirement.

## MAY 2020

5.9 | Kate Makosky receives her Doctor of Ministry in Urban Ministry Leadership from North Park Seminary.

5.25 | George Floyd killed in Minneapolis.

5.27 | United States passes 100,000 deaths due to COVID-19.

5.30 | Pastor Mike Hotz receives his certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Christos Center for Spirituality.

Confirmation Trek 7th and 8th graders prerecorded their presentations and with an evening Zoom Q+A session. | 5.9

Team World Vision (TWV) Virtual 6K for Water FCC's 72 participants (and several dogs who went viral to inspire others to walk for clean water!) raised \$6,695 bringing clean water for life to over 133 people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo! | 5.16

Neighborhood Clean Up Day Over 20 FCCers gathered to spread out, mask up, and care for our neighborhood by picking up trash. | 5.20

Building Partner Meetings begin Meetings happen regularly throughout the summer to check in and make plans for regathering inside our building while ensuring safety for all building partners. | 5.21

Virtual Summer Movie Nights begin Beginning with Aladdin Jr., from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend, one of our FCC musicals is let out of the vault and premiered on YouTube each Sunday night. | 5.24

Identity, Mission, and Vision Statement Ministry and Leadership Team members gather to continue refining these key statements about FCC.. | 5.27

Graduation Sunday Youth mentors tour around the Twin Cities bringing graduation presents to our high school graduates. | 6.7

Island Parties Plants and mulch are installed in the parking lot islands and Jonathan House led by the Feskes. | 6.8+10

Pop Up Essentials Led by Family Values for Life, household essentials were distributed to community families after businesses were shut down due to unrest following George Floyd's murder. | 6.12

Prophetic Lament by Soong-Chan Rah Book Study begins. Meets weekly on Zoom and in-person. | 6.16

Summer Book Club: The Choice by Dr. Edith Eva Enger | 6.24

Children and Family ministries begin holding monthly summer outdoor gatherings. | 6.29

Youth Ministry and Love Mercy Do Justice listening session | 7.8

Youth Ministry Outdoor Movie Night | 7.15

Outdoor Worship Service FCC sits in socially distanced squares on the lawn. There is no singing, over 130 are in attendance. The service is recorded and distributed online for those who cannot attend. | 7.19

White Awake by Daniel Hill Book Study begins. Meets weekly on Zoom and in-person. | 7.28

Summer Book Club: My Eyes Are Up Here meets with the author Laura Zimmermann. | 7.30

## AUGUST 2020

8.3 | Aaron Nosich, Minister to Youth and Families, joins the team.

Summer Book Club: Native by Kaitlin Curtice meets | 8.12

Outdoor Worship Service | 8.16

8.24 | George Beam, Lead Custodian, hired. Officially joins the team 9.1.2020.

10th Annual Backpack Event Family Values for Life hosts their backpack even at FCC as an 8-hour drive up event, over 800 backpacks are distributed. | 8.26

## FIRST COVENANT CHURCH OF SAINT PAUL

1280 Arcade Street, Saint Paul MN 55106

### Contact Us

phone: (651)774-0344

email: office@first-covenant.org

web: first-covenant.org

facebook: /FirstCovenantStPaul/

**First Covenant Church of Saint Paul**  
**CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS**  
**September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020**

<b>Birth</b>	<b>Date</b>
Layla Garcia-Hicks	June 7, 2020
Cora Alpert	Aug 7, 2020

<b>Baptism</b>	<b>Date</b>
Odin Lund	Nov 17, 2019
Cindy Eddy	Dec 8, 2019
Juniper Griffin	Feb 16, 2020

<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Date</b>
Mark Primoli	Sept 15, 2019
Gloria Seeley	Sept 20, 2019
Jerry Peterson	Sept 21, 2019
Jerry Rice	Jan 18, 2020
Helen Bengtson	Feb 11, 2020
Marshall Swenson	Feb 16, 2020
Dorothy Nygard	March 4, 2020
Roy Skoogberg	April 14, 2020
Martha Peterson	May 14, 2020
Bill Hult	June 2, 2020
Donna Erickson	July 28, 2020

**Confirmands - May 17, 2020\***

Elias Hagfors  
Rosemary Peck  
*\*Confirmation Sunday rescheduled from May 17, 2020 to September 20 2020 due to COVID-19.*

**Weddings**

Damien Griggs and Lauren Klein  
*Dec 31, 2019 at First Covenant Church*

**Transfer of Membership\***

Rev. Jim and Mrs. Bea Oberg  
*from Associated Church, Owatonna MN*  
Rev. Ken and Mrs. Pam Sohriakoff  
*from Abbey Way Covenant Church,  
Minneapolis, MN*

*\*These credentialed Covenant pastors and their spouses have transferred their membership pending affirmation at September 13, 2020's Annual Meeting.*

**Withdrawal of Membership**

Roger Carlson  
Jim Hinrichs and Marilyn Theesfeld  
Chris and Jennifer Penwell

## **MINISTRY TEAM**

**September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020**

Rev. Tom Cameron, *Executive Pastor (through July 2020)*  
*Facility Administrator (August 2020 - present)*  
Tony Cook, *Part-time Custodian (beginning February 12, 2020)*  
Donovan DeGaetano, *Minister of Children & Families*  
Audra Field, *Director of Administration (through October 29, 2019)*  
Rev. Mike Hotz, *Pastor of Community Life*  
Jon Hugger, *Lead Custodian (through retirement, April 25, 2020)*  
Ellen Jacobson, *Worship Assistant*  
Kristina Kithinji, *Bookkeeper*  
Judy Kline, *Office Coordinator*  
Shannon Loehrke, *Organist*  
Daniel Makosky, *Building Lockup*  
Dr. Kate Makosky, *Minister of Communication and Interim Minister of Youth & Families*  
Lora Murtha, *Nursery Coordinator*  
Rev. Ted Nordlund, *Pastor of Visitation (through retirement, March 13, 2020)*  
Aaron Nosich, *Minister to Youth & Families (beginning August 3, 2020)*  
Bruce Omogho, *Building Lockup (beginning July 1, 2020)*  
Juan Perez, *Custodian (through February 6, 2020)*  
Gordy Swanson, *Building Lockup (through November 30, 2019)*  
Jan Thoes, *Special Projects/Database Manager*  
Addin Vang, *Associate Minister of Youth & Families (through September 8, 2019)*  
Rev. Anne Vining, *Senior Pastor*  
Richard Voth, *Minister of Worship & Creative Arts*

## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020**

Sharla Scullen, <i>Chair</i>	Jorge Martinez
Joel Peck, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Marcy Turnquist
Jake Verdoorn, <i>Secretary</i>	Jill Weiss
Doug Jacobson, <i>Financial Officer</i>	Pastor Anne Vining
Mandy Griffin	Pastor Mike Hotz

### **Other Financial Officers**

Jim Bain, *Treasurer*  
Rachel Hanks, *Financial Secretary*

**First Covenant Church of Saint Paul**  
**2020-2021 Budget - Proposal for Leadership Team**  
 Revised 8/8/2020

Row	Approved Budget September 2019 to August 2020	Proposed Budget September 2020 to August 2021	Notes	
1	<b>GENERAL FUND INCOME BUDGET</b>			
2	<b>FAITH INCOME</b>			
3	Tithes & Weekly Giving	\$683,400	\$656,064	4% decrease
4	Faith & Special Giving			
5	Building & Grounds	\$8,100	\$8,100	Mortgage Giving (doesn't cover expense)
6	Spiritual Growth Combined	\$5,500	\$4,000	Misc. & Every Kid to Camp (EKTC) Gifts
7	Spiritual Growth Youth	\$1,000	\$1,000	Sr High Trip Faith Gifts
8	Missions & Outreach	\$5,500	\$4,300	Christmas Offering, Covenant World Relief
9	Worship & Arts	\$9,256	\$4,200	Christmas & Easter Memorials, Musical Offerings
10	<b>TOTAL FAITH INCOME</b>	<b>\$712,756</b>	<b>\$677,664</b>	
11	<b>Additional Sources of Revenue</b>			
12	Pastoral Ministry & Leadership Development	\$4,000	\$1,500	From Designated funds for women's expenses
13	<b>Ministry Teams Income:</b>			
14	Buildings and Grounds	\$8,000	\$7,538	Income from Bldg+Grounds Designated funds & Recycling Grant
15	Worship & Arts	\$8,517	\$2,600	Incl income from Reach for the Stars & Children's Music TRFs
16	Spiritual Growth (fees & fundraising)	\$21,434	\$16,434	Includes After School Program, EKTC fees, & TRF income
17	SG - Adults (fees)	\$1,000	\$700	Includes Women's Ministries & Book Sales
18	SG - Childrens (fees)	\$750	\$750	Designated fund income for Christmas Program & HTC
19	SG - Youth (fees & fundraising)	\$10,250	\$9,550	Includes Sr High Trip fees & fundraising
20	Love Mercy Do Justice	\$910	\$225	Trips/travel fees and Book Sales
21	Missions & Outreach	\$10,000	\$7,200	Various Bequest Funds to support Comos & Bryants
22	Congregational Life (fees)	\$1,500	\$1,500	Includes Funerals
23	Finance	\$350	\$300	Stock gains & misc. income
24	Office	\$100	\$0	
25	<b>FCC Operational Revenue:</b>			
26	Interest	\$1,100	\$800	Interest from Premier Checking, MMkt, & NCP Demand accounts
27	Building Rental	\$2,500	\$1,250	Receptions, weddings, recitals, etc.
28	<b>Institutional Income:</b>			
29	Haitian Fellowship	\$600	\$600	
30	Followers of Christ Hmong Baptist	\$16,500	\$14,250	\$1,000/month for six months and \$1,375/month for six months
31	Family Values for Life	\$9,000	\$8,400	\$700/month for two offices
32	Community Bible Study	\$1,000	\$500	Estimate of their gift at end of their program year
33	AA Groups	\$1,020	\$1,320	Two groups: \$60/month and \$50/month
34	La Vina	\$15,600	\$15,600	\$1,100/month for Foodshelf and \$200/month for worship space
35	Int'l Association for Refugees	\$16,250	\$20,050	Jonathan House \$1000/mo, appt \$350/mo in Sep & \$700/mo after
36	Restricted Fund Transfers	\$18,540	\$2,007	Designated funds transfers (undesigned memorials, bequests)
37	<b>TOTAL Additional Revenue</b>	<b>\$148,921</b>	<b>\$113,074</b>	
38	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$861,677</b>	<b>\$790,738</b>	
39	<b>GENERAL FUND EXPENSE BUDGET</b>			
40	<b>MINISTRY TEAMS EXPENSES:</b>			
41	Buildings & Grounds	\$114,925	\$122,772	Total Expense minus Mortgage
42	Mortgages	\$40,586	\$36,504	Building mortgage
43	Congregational Life	\$5,800	\$4,100	Includes hospitality and funerals (no 80+ Birthday Party this year)
44	Finance	\$3,925	\$4,014	Includes Payroll, Benefits, & Online Giving expenses
45	Missions & Outreach	\$34,170	\$29,851	Missions & Christmas Offering
46	Office Expense	\$20,508	\$19,788	Includes technology, printing, & postage
47	Spiritual Growth (Combined)	\$26,984	\$20,784	Includes After School Program and EKTC (no Block Party this yr)
48	Adult	\$2,480	\$1,650	Includes curriculum, speakers, and Adult Ministries
49	Children's	\$5,650	\$4,950	Includes HTC, Children's Ministry Curriculum, & Nursery expenses
50	Youth	\$14,400	\$12,300	Includes Sr High Trip, Confirmation, Curriculum, & Special Events
51	Love Mercy Do Justice	\$2,200	\$1,350	Includes Local Events & trips, Book Clubs, & Speakers
52	Worship & Arts	\$19,950	\$11,550	Includes Children's Musical
53	Additional Ministries	\$0	\$0	
54	<b>TOTAL NET MINISTRY TEAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$291,578</b>	<b>\$269,613</b>	
55	<b>STAFF SALARY/BENEFIT EXPENSES:</b>			
56	Pastoral Staff	\$207,987	\$182,427	No increases for tenured staff
57	Ministry Staff	\$233,328	\$243,511	Includes Senior & Associate Pastors
58	Support Staff	\$113,134	\$82,687	
59	<b>TOTAL STAFF SALARY EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$554,449</b>	<b>\$508,625</b>	
60	Staff Exp - Training & Leadership Development	\$15,650	\$12,500	Incl staff expenses, staff & laity educ/training, & Communications
61	<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$861,677</b>	<b>\$790,738</b>	
62	% Staff Expense to Total Expense	64%	64%	
63	<b>NET GENERAL FUND Over/(Short)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

INCOME includes ALL forecastable regular & special giving.  
 EXPENSES include ALL forecastable regular & special costs.