

Valley Covenant News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | MAY 2020

From the Council

The biggest issue before your Church Council in May was designing our plan to return to gathered worship, which is covered at length in this newsletter. Here are additional updates from the Council:

1. The Council is deeply grateful to each of you who are giving faithfully to support our mission as Valley Covenant Church.
2. A great deal of work took place at 127 S Maple, and the upstairs unit has now been rented.
3. The Council is aware that our Central Conference and The Evangelical Covenant Church, along with our two camps and missionaries, have been impacted by the pandemic. Local families, including within our church, may face more hardships in the future. We are putting plans in place to provide assistance for all of these needs.

Summer Adventure Take-Home Kits

If you know of a family with children feel free to cut out the attached information about our Summer Adventure Take-Home Kits, and share it with them. We want to bless families with intentional bible activities for their kids so that they can grow in faith together.

A Word of Thanks

VECC Family,

I just want to briefly thank you for the love and support you have given me these past several years as I have read books, attended lectures, written papers, and taken tests to finally achieve my Masters of Arts degree in Christian Formation at North Park Theological Seminary. And while your prayers and encouragement would be more than enough on their own, I also would not have been able to complete this journey without the use of my continuing education funds from the church each semester. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated, and I have done my best to honor your blessing of support by doing my best in each class I took. And I'm glad to say I was able to do this, as I was able to graduate with High Honors, which means a Seminary GPA above a 3.8. Now that this task is complete, I look forward to continuing to put this education to use as I serve this church body, students, children, and community!

--Pastor Chuck Potts



Valley Covenant
Kids Club
Summer
Adventure
2020

**ROCKY
RAILWAY
TAKE-HOME KITS**

Our in-person Summer Adventure program may have been cancelled this summer, but the learning and fun continues with these...

**SUMMER ADVENTURE
TAKE-HOME KITS!**

With the materials in each kit, plus the online resources, kids will be able to learn about Jesus with Summer Adventure at home!

For more info & to reserve your kits, go to:
www.valleycov.org/summer-adventure/

From Pastor Rick

Valley Covenant Church is never re-opening.

Because Valley Covenant Church never closed. We have always been investing ourselves in God's ministry in and around our communities, throughout these days of pandemic.

Oh, we may not have been gathered – in one location – on Sunday mornings – our building may have been closed – but that's only the aspect of Valley Covenant most visible to the human eye. But the church is and always has been: **people** who have been **redeemed** by the **grace, love and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, reaching out in love and service to others as a way of honoring Jesus.**

And the church has never stopped its primary **work** – a work that is borne out of its **identity**:

Identity: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession

Work: so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)

We don't need to be in our church facility to worship, serve, and proclaim God – even as much as we love this old building.

We don't need to be physically with one another to worship, serve, and proclaim God – even as much as we love one another, and love being together.

No one can stop the people of God (and the part of that people who call Valley Covenant Church "my church") – no one can stop us from proclaiming that He is excellent and worthy of our praise.

I know it is hard to move through this season. But remember:

- We are not moving in fear;
- Nor are we taking our "marching orders" from any elected political leader – on either side of the aisle.
- No one can grant, and no one can take away, the **essential** nature of our calling in Jesus Christ.
- His example is to lay down our rights for the good and the service of others.
- Our standard is God's Word: Do not look to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Phil. 2:4)

So we will continue to love and serve Jesus Christ; we will continue to love and serve one another, and our communities, in His name; and we will resume gathered worship as you can read elsewhere in this newsletter.

Financials

By: Gary Pals

The following are highlights from the April Financial Report:

1. Giving has continued to be good throughout the shutdown.
2. General Fund receipts were \$4,630 above budgeted need.
3. General Fund expenses were on budget.
4. General Fund year-to-date balance is + \$8,187.

Re-Gathering the church

The church – God's holy people – sometimes are gathered. Sometimes we are scattered. But we are always the church.

For the past 10 weeks, we have been a church that is geographically scattered, but spiritually gathered. We have been spiritually gathered through our online worship experiences, through our Daily Listen (and yes, I know that it isn't every single day), through our interaction with one another over the phone or from a distance in our backyards or on our front porches, or through serving others at Bread of Life.

As we plan for the re-gathering of our church family, we are holding onto the guidance of our Conference Superintendent, Pastor Danny Martinez:

1. Is it **Legal**? In our region of Illinois, all indicators are solidly telling us we are in "phase three", limiting gatherings to ten or fewer.
2. Is it **Mission-Critical**? This question asks us to prioritize what we do, in keeping with our highest visions and values. God's Church is a mission-driven entity; we seek to prioritize that which moves our mission forward, and avoid that which might hinder mission advancement.
3. Is it **Wise**? This question calls on us to use great care, along with God's gift of spiritually-enlightened higher judgment, to plan our re-gathering in a way that honors, respects, and protects each person.

Re-Gathering – in June

Here are the plans that your church Council has adopted:

1. Starting in June, we invite church members to attend one of our small group services here at church.
2. These services will be approximately 30 minutes long, and will include scripture, prayer, a spiritual meditation by Pastor Rick, and Holy Communion.
3. We realize that this might feel awkward, but because of the state's limit, only nine people (plus Pastor Rick) will be able to attend any given service. Thus, we will ask you to call the church office and reserve a place for yourself at the service day and time of your choice.
4. We ask you not to show up at a given service if you have not reserved a place for that service.
5. We encourage:
 - Social distancing of 6 feet or more (seating is currently arranged for distancing)
 - The use of masks (encouraged, not required)
 - No physical contact (Handshakes or hugs)
 - Staying home if you have a cough or fever
6. We know that our church members and friends have a variety of perspectives on these things, and we ask everyone to treat one another with honor and respect, especially when we see things differently.

In June, our gathered service times for ten people will be:

Wednesdays, 7pm

Thursdays, 10am

We will continue to offer video worship experiences every Sunday.

Re-Gathering – Beyond June

As state limits on group size are adjusted from time to time, the church Council will re-visit our plans and adjust them.