

# Covenant News



## April 2026



### You Are Allowed to Wrestle

*Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.... Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed" (Exodus 32:25, 28).*

Here is something I want you to know before you read another word: you are allowed to have questions.

You are allowed to read a story in Scripture and think — wait, that doesn't seem right. You are allowed to sit in the pew and hear a familiar text and feel confused, or troubled, or unconvinced. You are allowed to wrestle. That wrestling is not a failure of faith. It might actually be the beginning of it.

Every single person who reads the Bible is an interpreter. There is no such thing as just reading the text. The moment your eyes move across a page-- your history, your experience, your culture, your losses, your hopes — all of it comes with you. This has always been true. It was true for the communities who first told these stories around fires and in homes and in letters passed between early churches. It was true for every translator, every preacher, every Sunday school teacher who ever handed you a felt board with a picture of Noah's ark on it.

*The question is never whether we interpret. The question is whether we know we are doing it.*

For a long time one interpretation dominated. It centered certain voices and certain experiences and presented itself not as an interpretation but as simply what the text means. Many of us received it that way. We didn't know we were being handed a particular reading. We thought we were being handed the truth.

And so when we had a different reaction, when something troubled us, when a story felt unfair, when we couldn't reconcile what we were reading with the God we sensed was present with us in our hardest moments, we thought something was wrong with us. We got quiet. Some of us left.

But here is what I have come to believe with my whole heart: the text can hold your questions. Scripture is not fragile. God is not fragile. The tradition of wrestling with God is as old as the name Israel itself — which means *one who wrestles with God*. Jacob walked away from that encounter limping. He also walked away blessed.

When we bring historical context to a text, understanding who wrote it, when, for whom, under what conditions, we don't diminish it. We honor it enough to actually hear it. When we ask whose voice is missing from a story, who isn't named, who is standing at the edges of the scene, we aren't attacking Scripture. We are reading it more fully.

You are allowed to bring your whole self to these ancient words. Your doubt, your grief, your confusion, your anger, your hard-won wisdom. That is not irreverence. That is relationship, the relationship between you and the Living Word.

## FREE community MEAL

Our next FREE community meal will be Thursday, April 23, from 5:00-6pm. So, if you need a night off from cooking dinner or you know of someone else who needs it, help us spread the word. It is FREE for anyone and everyone!

### Covenant Lutheran Women Annual Plant Sale

Order forms are coming. As soon as Arlene Lasher has the dates for order deadline confirmed for April, it will be announced in bulletin and on the website.



**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!**

4/2 James Gradert  
4/5 Bruce Constant  
4/7 Gary Edler  
4/10 Jackie Blogna  
4/10 Ted Lockmiller  
4/22 Annie Copeland  
4/25 Jacqui Knerem  
4/27 Charlotte Zaranka



4/9 Deb & Chuck Dickey

Happy 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

4/15 Toni & Robert Ridgell

Happy 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

4/15 Sheila & Harry Werner

Happy 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Lutheran Church of the Covenant  
Treasurer's Report-February 2026  
March 2026 Council Meeting

**Treasurer's Report—Talking Points (Things You Should Know)**

Financial Statement Highlights

**Operating Funds**

- Revenues are \$ 18,543, Expenditures totaled \$ 18,949. resulting in an Excess of Expenses Over Revenues of \$ (406). Preliminary Budget totals are presented for informational purposes only. Items of significance are:

Revenues

- Only item of note is the Unrestricted Funds total of \$ 861 reflects the Build Back 20285 Funds. As noted in the January Report, the target goal was achieved. It is assumed that all envelopes have been submitted, as no additional contributions have been received, and to the best of my knowledge, no effort has been made to verify such.
- Offerings for the first two months of the year are "soft". As I mentioned in last month's Report, we will need to have either another fundraising program like the "Build Back 2025" or draw down funds from the Investment accounts. I cannot over emphasize the need for judicious decisions regarding discretionary expenditures.

Expenses

- February/March expenses (Accounts Payable) which are open/unpaid include:
  - First Quarter Insurance-\$ 1,238.
  - February VISA Statement-\$1,519.
  - Federal Tax Deposit-February-\$ 800.
  - March-Electric-\$ 367.
  - Portico Benefit-February-\$ 2,306.
  - Note: January & February Gas (Enbridge Gas) were paid using the US Bank VISA card-\$ 3,167.
- Cash in the Bank at end of February 2026 was approximately \$ 605.

Lutheran Church of the Covenant

Council Meeting Minutes for Feb 17, 2026

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm by Pastor Andrea

**Present:** MaryKaye Bernardo, Vince Besednjak, Mike Davis, Jennifer Lasher-Dobush, Pastor Andrea, Charlotte Zaranka

**Absent:** Chuck Dickey, Ted Lockmiller, Gwen Susanek

**Devotions and Prayer:** Jen – New Perspective

## **Council Business:**

Minutes were approved/amended for meeting Tues, Jan 6, 2026.

Motion made by Jen and seconded by Vince.

**Pastor's Report:** Written report – Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. The theme will be “In the Bleak” this year. Cooking class had 9 attending. A possible council retreat in March. See the office for more details.

**Treasurer's Report** – Mike – Written report – Still operating at a deficit \$(1,528.00) end of January 2026. We need another “Build Back” program or one similar for 2026. See the report in the office for more details.

## **BOARDS:**

**Finance** – Gwen – absent. Two people have trained with Mike on posting the envelopes. So far Gwen has done the envelopes herself twice and is doing fine. She also printed the statements. Now copying incoming checks before going to U.S. Bank. Need quarterly statements to go out so people can see where they stand.

**Social Ministry:** - MaryKaye - No report - Met with Superintendent of schools about after school program. Also, if students need community service credit.

**Education:** Chuck – Absent

**Worship and Music:** Jen – Report - Jen got together with Pastor and Master regarding Ash Wednesday service, 5 soup suppers, and Maudy Thursday and Good Friday services. Info will be printed in the bulletins. See report in office for details.

**Manager's Report:** Vince – No report – Checked roof for leaks in Sacristy office. Drips and ceiling sagging. Will call the roofers who reroofed not long ago. Vince retired as custodian and daughter Vanessa took over that job. He will still be Manager and do maintenance.

**Old Business:** St Pauly shed program finished 2025 as follows.

21,652 lbs of clothing were collected, enough to clothe 3,988 people around the world. Thank you to all who donated and/or helped with the shed project.

**New Business:** Need to find someone from church to take items collected at back of the church to the hunger center. Pastor Andrea met with Pastor Harper about increasing their donation for using the church. He may give a one-time bigger check and then weekly amounts. They will meet once a month. May use the Scout Troop from Master for volunteer work toward their badges.

Church Trac – new computer program - half the names have been transferred so far. See office for more detail.

**Next council meeting** is Thurs, March 19, 2026 at 7:15pm.



# CONFERENCE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.



Awareness, Education, and  
Community Support.

**OVERCOMING  
SELF-IMPOSED  
LIMITATIONS**



**Healing and Transformation:**  
Empowering survivors and fostering  
resilience. Exploring mental well-  
being and spiritual strength.

## Details and Location

**DATE:** SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026

**TIME:** 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

**LOCATION:** MAPLE HEIGHTS SENIOR CENTER  
15901 LIBBY ROAD, MAPLE HEIGHTS, OHIO 44137

## FEATURED PRESENTERS

• Contae Bentley,  
M.Ed., LSW

• Lisa Husamadeen,  
M.Ed., LPC

• Dr. Terry A. Webb,  
LPC, NCC, CCTP

FOR MORE INFORMATION & REGISTRATION, CALL 216-587-9602.

# *The Lutheran Church of the Covenant* April 2026

Sunday Servers	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	5:00 am Easter Sunday 10:30 Adult Bible Study/Sunday School	6 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	7 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	8 6-8pm AA Meeting in Hall	9 10 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	3 7:00 pm Good Friday Covenant 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	4 9-12 Art for Soul in Hall 3:00 pm Women's AA in Parlor 6-8 pm CA in Hall
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	5:00 am Easter Sunday 10:30 Adult Bible Study/Sunday School	6 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	7 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	8 6-8pm AA Meeting in Hall	9 10 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	3 7:00 pm Good Friday Covenant 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	11 9-12 Art for Soul in Hall 3:00 pm Women's AA in Parlor 6-8 pm CA in Hall
AG: Claudia Senderak, Gwen Susanek	12 9:00 am Second Sunday of Easter 10:30 Adult Bible Study/Sunday School	13 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	14 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	15 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	16 6-8 NAMI meeting in hall	17 10-2 Council retreat Parlor 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Hall	18 9-12 Art for Soul in Hall 3:00 pm Women's AA in Parlor 6-8pm CA in Hall
AG: Claudia Senderak, Gwen Susanek	19 9:00 am Third Sunday of Easter 10:30 Adult Bible Study/Sunday School	20 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	21 7:00 pm Council meeting parlor 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	22 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Parlor	23 Community Meal Dine In hall 5:00-6:00 pm	24 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	25 9-12 Art for Soul in Hall 3:00 pm Women's AA in Parlor 6-8 pm CA in Hall
AG: Shella Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein, Charlotte Zaranka	26 9:00am Fourth Sunday of Easter 10:30 Adult Bible Study/ Sunday School	27 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Hall	28 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hal	29 6-8 pm AA Meeting in Parlor	30		

# *Covenant News*

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant  
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216-662-0370

## Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday: April 2nd

**7:00 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Covenant**

Good Friday: April 3rd

**7:00 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Covenant**

Easter: Sunday, April 5th  
Festival Eucharist 9:00 a.m.