



Covenant News

July 2026

The Word You Didn't Know You Needed

There is a Hebrew word I have been thinking about a lot lately, and I want to give it to you because I think it might change how you read your Bible.



The word is *hesed*. It appears hundreds of times in the Hebrew scriptures, and we usually translate it as “mercy” or “lovingkindness” or “steadfast love” but none of those quite captures it. *Hesed* is the word for a love that does not evaporate when things get hard. It is the love that tracks you down when you have wandered. It is the love that shows up at the worst possible moment and refuses to leave. Not because you earned it. Not because you deserved it. Just because that is what it does.

The rabbis said *hesed* is one of the pillars on which the world stands.

Once you know the word, you start seeing it everywhere. It is in Psalm 23 — goodness and hesed shall follow me all the days of my life. It is in Ruth, who refuses to leave Naomi even when she has every reason to go. It is underneath the whole story of God and God's people — not the angry transactions, not the rules and punishments, but the stubborn, relentless love that keeps showing up anyway. And it is the love taught and shown by Jesus Christ.

And here is what I want you to carry with you: hesed is not just a word that describes God. It is the word that describes what we are called to be for each other. Steadfast. Forgiving. Enduring. That is the heartbeat of the gospel. And it is in you!

In peace and hesed,

Pastor Andrea





Christmas in July 2026

We are launching Christmas in July, and we want you to be part of it!

Here is how it works. Our Christmas tree is out in worship, and on it you will find paper ornaments that say \$20. Take one, put it in your offering envelope with an extra \$20 — that's just \$5 a week — and return it any Sunday in July. When you do, you will receive a hand-decorated ornament made by our very own congregation members, young and old, as a small token of our gratitude.

That's it. Simple, fun, and completely doable.

Here is the magic: if every giving household participates, we can close the gap between what we have budgeted and what we are actually receiving each month. Together, one ornament at a time, we can do something really meaningful for this congregation we love.

This is a community challenge and a community celebration. Let's see what we can do together this July.

Look for the tree. Grab an ornament. Be part of the magic.

Our next FREE community meal will be Thursday, July 23 (5-6PM). We are doing dine-in only in our fellowship hall.

FREE
community
MEAL

Waste Less, Give More



A recycling station has been set up in the fellowship hall. Look for the three blue bins under the clock, and please recycle here as often as you can!



7/1 Joyce Mihalek

7/10 Amber Kyle

7/3 Rosa Garnett

7/25 Mark Gabor

7/9 Linda Allende

7/31 Kristine Sandor

7/9 Emily Knerem



7/2 Jennifer & Chris Constant

Happy 15th Anniversary

7/12 Nicole & Jeff Garvin

Happy 17th Anniversary

Lutheran Church of the Covenant
Council Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Meeting called to order at 7:23pm by President Ted Lockmiller

Present: MaryKaye Bernardo, Mike Davis, Ted Lockmiller, Pastor Andrea, Gwen Susanek, Charlotte Zaranka

Absent: Chuck Dickey, Vince Besednjak, Jen Lasher-Dobush

Devotions and Prayer: Gwen - "Hope, what is it?"

Council Business:

Minutes were approved/amended for meeting Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Motion made by Charlotte and seconded by Gwen

Pastor's Report – Written report – Pentecost, Sunday, May 24 joint worship with Master and New Cornerstone churches.

Sunday, June 14 there will be a Hymn Sing at both churches. Master is having a picnic after their service and Covenant is invited.

Jen has been tracking attendance on our new church site. Average attendance is 27 for regular service, 29 if you include Easter.

Prayer group is starting back up on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 6pm.

Pastor will be gone Aug 16 or 23?

Master's Church Council retreat is scheduled for June 28th.

New Addendum to facility rental agreement for New Cornerstone Baptist Church. Council approved. Motion made by MaryKaye 1st, Gwen 2nd.

Treasurers Report – Mike - Written Report - Through April there was \$10,523 excess spending. Mike is concerned about meeting our bills. See report in the office for more details.

BOARDS:

Finance: Gwen - no report

Social Ministry – MaryKaye – written report – trying to get MH Jr High and High School kids for a summer book club. She sent out letters to all the churches in the area about our community meal held last Thursday of each month. She is trying to work with the Diversion program in Maple Hts. See office for more details.

Education: Chuck – Absent – No report – No Bible class or Sunday school on Pentecost. Also, none for summer.

Worship and Music – Jen – absent - written report – Master is hosting “Picnic and Praise” on Wednesday, June 24 and July 1st at 6:00pm. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Sunday worship outdoors will be every other week this summer. There will be a schedule to follow starting in June. See the office for more info.

Manager’s Report – Vince – Absent -no report

Old Business: Shed brought in \$139.84 in April. Divinity Lutheran rummage sale Sat, May 23, will bag unsold items for our shed. Several of us will go pick them up.

New Business: - ELCA innovation grant was approved. This is to see if we are digitally fine. \$33,000 to update, \$30,000 to check digital presence. Compensation for Pastor up to \$35,000 per year to take against her taxes for rent, utilities, etc. Council approved. Motion made by MaryKaye, Gwen 2nd. See the office for more details.

Next Council Meeting: June 16, 2026, 7:15pm **Devotions/prayer:** MaryKaye Brian will be here to update us on the Edward Jones account.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:44pm with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Charlotte Zaranka Council Secretary
Comments: None

Annual Blossom Outing

Join us to experience the unforgettable music of John Williams, the “Maestro of the Movies,” whose craft has shaped the sound of modern cinema. From the soaring heroism of Superman and Star Wars to the wonder of Jurassic Park, this thrilling program celebrates the imagination, emotion, and magic of one of the greatest composers in film history.

We are planning to attend the Sunday, Sept. 6th concert 7:00 pm. The tickets at the Senior discount rate are \$47.00 each. The deadline to purchase the tickets is Sunday, July 26th. Please make checks payable to Arlene Lasher, as she has already reserved a number of seats.

Hoping you can join us, Arlene Lasher

Covenant News

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

Thank you Covenant gardeners

Thank you to all of you who placed orders for flowers or vegetable plants at our recent annual sale. Sending the order forms via email seems to be the best way to reach the largest number of people quickly. I hand out or send paper order forms to the folks who do not have email as for whatever reason do not receive one via their email. At any rate, since this system has been pretty successful we will continue to use this format.

Many thanks to my hard-working volunteer crew of; Barb & Chuck Gaglione; Karen & Ray Zack; Charlotte Zaranka; Paula Hohenstein; Vince Besednjak; and Jen Lasher-Dobush. Again, as usual, this flower sale only happens because these folks are willing to spend a very long, tiring, day unloading the plants from the nursery, and then filling all the orders for pick-up the next day. A mere “thank you” does not begin to express my gratitude to all of them for their help.

We had a bit of a ‘scaled-down’ sale this year due to a reduced number of actual orders. I’m sure this is mostly due to the reduced number of “able” gardeners at Covenant. However, because of the orders we did have and your generous donations, we were still able to place nice planters by each of the church doors and realize a profit of about 460.00.

This seems to be shaping up to be another challenging gardening year, what with the cool spring and now an early heat wave. I know you will all meet the challenges presented to us (after all, this is just another Cleveland summer!) and realize lovely flowers and abundant vegetables.

Thanks again. See you next Spring, same time, same station. Arlene Lasher