

FEBRUARY 2019

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NL COVENANT

Search for the Perfect Family

By Pastor Kevin Melin

I just finished my final family gathering for what becomes an elongated Christmas celebration and it was again a wonderful year doing so. Yet it reminded me, as much as I love the many in my nuclear and extended families, how difficult it is to experience that 'healthy family' dynamic. That is true now and it was true in the scriptures. In fact, it is much easier to find families marked by sin and pain as you look at this sample pack from Genesis alone:

- First couple massively disobeyed God (Gen ch.3).
- Firstborn son commits murder of family member (ch.4:8)
- Infertility grief causes Sarah to attempt motherhood through a surrogate child and she lives in jealous rage as life played this out (ch.16)
- Isaac's wife Rebekah bears twins and foster sibling rivalry with huge generational implications (ch.19)
- Jacob deceives and manipulates his own brother to get the birthright and blessing (ch.25-27)
- And on it goes, in Genesis, in all of scripture and in homes today!

Why so few harmonious family dynamics? Mainly because humanity is not harmonious! We are a broken people alienated from God and one another. And when we put people together ANYWHERE guess what we get? **Messiness!!** Which as a word has at its' core 'SIN'... MesSINess.

But be aware that God has a deeper purpose and redemptive plan for our mess. Scripture's main theme is God's redemptive plan to remake broken sinners. It ONLY comes as we become aware of our sinful broken self and our total inability to save ourselves. Yet beyond that we come to realize our absolute need to let God's mercy do the saving through the redemptive plan of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So, take heart if family is not the embodiment of harmony. God specializes in redeeming messes and look for your opportunity to apply grace and the gospel to move messes to his mercies.

(continued on reverse side)

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Vitality Pathway Before US!!

Seventy-six of our constituency here at ECC attended the Veritas Workshop led by Jon Kramka on Saturday, January 12th. Jon, a staff person at our NWC office, did a superb job leading us! It was an informational day with time to react and interact to various aspects of our church's vitality. Thanks to each one who worked to make the event happen and for each one in attendance for investing in our church in this way.

Jon gave us common information, language and picture of what is involved if we were to start down the pathway. Then at our Annual Meeting on January 27th, our members voted to form a Vitality Team and start down the pathway which will help us move toward the goal of being a 'Healthy Missional' church. We all value being that for the honor and glory of God so as to be who God calls us for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ. It was also announced that Barry Lynch and Pastor Mike McCain will lead this team moving forward. Mike has experience in this from his time at Salem and Barry will take all his leadership from life and the work place and put it to use for this end.

Jon will be no stranger to us as he will serve as our 'coach' for the duration of our involvement in the Vitality Pathway. Prayer is of utmost importance for us! Any renewal and revitalization starts with prayer for all of our hearts to seek with greater intensity what God has for us NOW! Please pray for Barry, Mike and Jon along with the team that will be assembled AND for all of us for a fresh work of God's Spirit in our midst!!

In His Grip, Pastor Kevin

YOUTH MINISTRY @ NLECC

TALENT NEEDED!

Do you have a hidden talent that you've always wanted to show off? Is there some random thing you can do that would amaze a crowd? Are you free the evening of Sunday, February 10th? If the answer to any of those questions is yes, please join us for our talent show fundraiser!

The evening will begin at 5:00 pm with a meal and art show in the Fellowship Hall, followed by a talent show in the Youth Room at 6:00 pm. There will be a free-will donation and all the proceeds will go towards our mission trip to the Blackfeet Nation in Montana.

If you're interested in a slot during the talent show or in displaying artwork, you can sign up in the church lobby or talk to Hanna Schmidt at (320)212-6494.

People from all walks of life are invited and encouraged to join us! We'll have something for everybody, and the show will be family friendly for those with small children. Save the date!

UPCOMING TOPICS

Feb 6th **Islam**

Feb 13th **Eastern Religions**

Feb 20th **Godly Relationships**

Feb 27th **Dating Panel**

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 8th Third Half (after basketball game)
- 10th Talent Show Fundraiser
- 15th Third Half (after basketball game)
- 24th Children & Youth Ski Outing

SKI OUTING

On Sunday, February 24th, our youth will join our children's ministry for an afternoon of skiing, snowboarding, and tubing! We'll meet at church at 2:00 pm and will car-pool to Andes Tower Hills.

We'll plan to be on the slopes from 4-8pm, and will return home by around 9:30 pm. The cost is \$15 per lift ticket, \$5 for ski rental, and \$15 for snowboard rental. A 2-hour tubing ticket is included with the lift ticket.

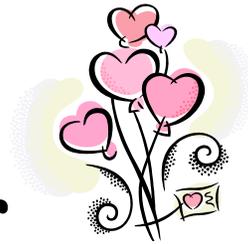
Friends are welcome to join us! Talk to Matt or sign up in the youth room if you'd like to join us!

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who supported the youth at our Annual Meeting fundraiser. We raised close to \$2,000 for our mission trip. Thank you thank you thank you!



Kids Corner



“F3...Fellowship, Food and Friends” Sunday, February 10th

Following the morning worship service, we will be serving a main dish, fruit/veggie salads (kid-friendly), dessert, and beverages for you! There is a small donation request of \$2 adults/\$1 kids to help with the cost of the meal. What a great time to linger a bit longer, visit together, and have lunch taken care of for the day! ☺

****Extra feature this month includes a “mini-session” from Pastor Kevin on communion with kids and baptism following the meal. There will be organized activities/care for kids during that time.*

February VALENTINE’S DAY PARTY (afterschool celebration)

The date will be Monday, February 11th from 3:30-6:00pm! Cost is \$3 per person. Ride bus #8 from school (bring your teacher a parent note) or have your parent drop you off. Ages K-6th grade! Bring a friend or two! Our party will include an afterschool snack, games, craft project, a movie and supper. Questions? Contact Paula at 354-2446 or obby@tds.net

Young Adults Special Valentine’s Day “Couples Night Out” on Friday, February 15th from 6:30-8:30pm

A night of friends and fellowship, at Les and Kathy Graham’s...highlighted by a winter sleigh ride. Childcare will be available (UPON REQUEST) at the church from 6:30-8:30pm. Donations for childcare will help support youth mission trip. RSVP NO LATER than Wednesday, February 13th.

All ages/church “Ski Day” at Andes Tower Hills, Sunday, February 24th

Leave from church together (carpool/caravan) at 2:00 pm. Ski from 4-8pm, return home approx. 9:30pm. (individuals can leave earlier as needed)

Cost is \$15 for lift ticket, \$5 for ski rental, \$15 for snowboard rental. Includes a free 2-hr tubing ticket. BRING friends and family!

RSVP will be required in advance. Watch for details.

Church Happenings ...

Service Opportunity - An adult or teen volunteer (teen with adult present) is **needed** to provide on-site childcare for a small group meeting at the church on **Thursday, February 14th** and **Thursday, February 28th from 6:30-7:30pm**. Please contact Rachel Westby if interested in helping at 320-212-1838.

Adult Sunday School Class Offerings:

For Adults of All Ages: Barry Lynch is teaching a class on "Experiencing God". In his classic book, "Knowing God," J.I. Packer writes, What were we made for? To know God. What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. Jesus said, "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:3). You see, the heart of eternal life and the heart of Experiencing God is for you to know God and to know His Son Jesus Christ whom He has sent. It is through our relationship with Christ that God reveals His will and purpose for your life. He invites us to join Him where He is already at work. The key to experiencing God is obedience. Are you ready for the adjustments? Join us in the large side of the Fellowship Hall.

For Young Adults: Starting on Sunday, February 3rd, a Sunday School class for Younger Adults will begin, with topics ranging from marriage, parenting, managing finances and others relevant to this season of life. All young adults/couples are welcome. The class will meet from 9am-10:15am and will include light breakfast items. The class will primarily be facilitated by Mitch and Sara Barber, but will include other speakers and panel discussions. We hope to see you there!



Faith Works' February Event: We Love our Heroes! Faith Works will be sponsoring a "card shower" for the Ambulance and Fire Departments of New London on **Sunday, February 24th**. Cards will be available from before Sunday School to after the church service so you can write a note of appreciation for our fearless, tireless, life-saving New London heroes. If you would like to write a note of thanks before February 24th, feel free to do so and drop it off with Adam or Amy Gronli.

Inquirers Membership Class

The next Inquirers Class for those considering membership here at ECC or just curious about our church/denomination will be held over the course of two upcoming Wednesday evenings in February on **February 6th and February 20th from 6:00-7:30pm in the library**. If you can join us for the family meal at 5:30pm, Pastor Kevin will reserve a table for the group.

Women's Ministries

Women's Ministries Sunday will be held on **Sunday, February 10th**. The women will be serving cookies during the 10:00-10:30am Fellowship Time.

The Women's Ministries is looking for a secretary (short board meetings once a month or less) and a Wedding Co-Coordinator (as needed when a wedding is held in the Church). Also, if you have a heart to help with serving events (on a Committee with others on rotating basis) like Pot Luck meals etc., we need to hear from you! Please see Judy Kulset or Sherry Olson for more information.

Mission Links (Quilting Group)

Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 10:00am

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 9:00am

Tuesdays Table at ECC

6 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month

February Council Meeting

The February Council meeting has been rescheduled to **Thursday, February 21st at 8pm** due to Valentine's Day.

On Tuesday, February 12th at 7pm here at NLECC in the Sanctuary (following Tuesday's Table in the Fellowship Hall), **Dr. Alyas Masih, a past Muslim, will share** of his conversion and how one might share the gospel with a Muslim friend, co-worker or neighbor. Dr. Masih currently is a medical doctor in St Cloud. He holds a weekly non-denominational bible study out of his home covering an assortment of topics. Invite people who might have interest in hearing how to reach Muslims with the gospel! (this event was rescheduled from Jan. 29th due to winter weather)



Weather Related Cancellation Policy

During these coming winter months, when you question whether an ECC event or activity has been cancelled or rescheduled due to weather, please note the following guidelines:

***If NL/S schools have cancelled or sent students home early due** to inclement weather, evening programs at ECC are automatically cancelled or rescheduled. A school "late start" generally does not affect our church evening schedule.

***Cancellations or late start of any church related activity will be posted** on our website, www.nlcovchurch.org, and on Willmar radio station *KWLM's Operation Snowdesk* (1340AM radio, or website <http://www.kwlm.com>).

***Weather-related Cancellations will also be sent out as an e-mail** to those on the church's e-mail list. To be included in these and other e-notifications from the church office, send your e-mail address to office@nlcovchurch.org.

***Use your own discretion.** If you deem it not safe to be out, stay at home, even if an event has not been cancelled.

Due to the timing of the Annual meeting, the minutes will not be included in this newsletter but will be included in the March newsletter and posted to the church bulletin board once available.

"God ~ Our Mountain Mover"

Isaiah 54:10: "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.



This weekend you'll hear from scripture and the stories of real-life women who have experienced God's mighty mountain moving power in their lives.

You'll hear how God drew them to Himself as they lived out faith in the midst of their "mountainous terrain". Our desire for you is that through their stories, your heart will be encouraged as they share a journey that will perhaps touch on the very issues in your own life and relationships today.

Who? Adult women of ALL ages

What? 6th Annual New London Covenant Church Women's Retreat

When? Friday evening-Saturday afternoon, **February 22nd-23rd**

(We invite you to set aside the time for the whole retreat, but if you can't, know that you can come and go as you are able throughout the weekend.)

Where? Held at the home of Kathy Graham

Why? We are blessed by each other's friendship and encouragement when we spend time together.

This 24-hour retreat is designed for ECC adult women of all ages to fellowship together and enjoy time set aside for visiting and working on personal lap projects, as well as a 2-session speaker/study, and optional organized activities as well.

The cost is minimal, with scholarship funds available as well. Plan to spend all or any of the designated time with us! There is a brochure with the specific schedule, activities, and a registration form available February 3rd in your church mailboxes, at the welcome desk, or on the church website. www.nlcovchurch.org **RSVP DUE Sunday, February 17th**

Contact Paula Holmen (320-894-7019) or Kathy Graham (320-262-6043) with questions.

Community News & Events ...

Gary Johnson from the Better Business Bureau will present a program and provide resources to protect against financial fraud on **Tuesday, February 5th at 6:30pm at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church** after Tuesday's Table. Anyone is welcome to attend.

The **NL-S Annual ECFE Chili Supper** will be held at Prairie Meadows Learning Center on **Thursday, February 7th from 4:30-7pm**. See community bulletin board for more information.

On **Friday, February 8th from 11-1:30pm, Habitat for Humanity** will hold their **7th Annual Souper Bowl fundraiser meal** at First Presbyterian Church (312 6th St SW) in Willmar. Please see community bulletin board for more information.

On **Saturday, February 23, 2019 from 2-4pm**, St. Luke's Lutheran Church (201 Ida St E) in Garfield, MN will host **Psychotherapist & School Counselor Tom Kersting, author of "Disconnected"**. Tickets are \$10 and only 400 are available. Please call (320) 834-2285 for ticket info. Come and learn how to reconnect our digitally distracted kids. See the community bulletin board or www.stlukeschurchgarfield.org for more information.



Minnesota Food Share

Did you know that MN FoodShare Month doesn't just happen during the month of March? The Link Food Pantry is able to count pounds of food and monetary funds donated from February 25th - April 7th.

2019 March Campaign Hunger Facts:

Nearly one in ten Minnesotans experience food insecurity.

- 13.8% of children in Minnesota are food insecure.
- 9.5% of Minnesotans live below the poverty level.
- Over 3,000,000 visits were made to Minnesota food shelves each year, 2011-2017, with over 3.4 million visits in 2017.

The number of food insecure seniors and seniors utilizing food shelves continues to increase. Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves and food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity. Supporting government programs like SNAP ("food stamps") and creating a more just and equitable food system are integral parts of meeting the needs of food insecure households and working toward ending hunger in our communities.

Tuesday's Table Guest Speaker:

Tuesday, February 5th at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church (right after the Tuesday's Table meal) In case of inclement weather, the back-up date is Tuesday, March 5th. Gary Johnson of The Better Business Bureau will present the *Be Wise Be Informed Be Empowered* program and provide resources to protect against financial fraud. Gary will share how to recognize the RED FLAGS that scam artists are employing to defraud seniors and others in today's marketplace. Learn more about the BBB and its efforts to empower consumers with information, its Wise Giving Charity review and other resources to avoid scams and fraudulent fundraising.

Tuesday's Table:

February 5th – Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church February 19th – Faith Lutheran Church
February 12th – Evangelical Covenant Church February 26th – Peace Lutheran Church

Monthly Giving Opportunities:

The Link is now offering monthly giving as a convenient option for our donors. You can set it up online giving through The Link's website at www.youarethelink.org or directly through your bank. Please contact Rhonda at 320-354-LINK or email her director@youarethelink.org for more information.

Chasity Ommodt, 320.354.5555, outreach@youarethelink.org



FEBRUARY PRAYER CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Matt & Jodi Kulset & Family	2 Beverly Lambert
3 Kevin & Shannon Lindquist & Family	4 Larry & Karen Lindquist	5 Mark & Jacky Lindquist	6 Willard & Bonnie Lindquist	7 Marilyn Lungstrom	8 Barry & Deidre Lynch & Family	9 Charles & Marilyn Magnuson
10 Sherman & Bette Mankell	11 Joe & Lisa Mead	12 Kevin & Mary Melin	13 Grant & Cortney Miller	14 Gene & Tris Mische & Family	15 Jim & Laura Molenaar	16 Annie Monson
17 Nick & Sarah Moore & Family	18 Arlene Nelson	19 Duaine & Rose Nelson	20 Jed & Lindsey Nelson & Family	21 Josh & Jennifer Nelson & Family	22 Lyle & JoAnn Nelson	23 Robert & Karen Nelson
24 Richard & Carmen Olson	25 Richard & Sherry Olson	26 Saralyn Olson	27 Garret & RoxAnn Radabaugh & Family	28 James & Linda Radabaugh		



February



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Youth Winter Retreat @ LBBC Family Promise	2 Youth Winter Retreat @ LBBC Family Promise
3 9:00am – Sunday School (all ages) 10:30am – Worship	4 6:30-8:30pm – Women’s Bible Study @ JoAnn Nelson’s Home	5 10:00am – Mission Links 12:30pm – Women’s Ministries Board Mtg 6:00pm – Tuesday’s Table @ Our Lady of the Lakes, BBB speaker on financial fraud to follow	6 6:30am – Men’s Fellowship Breakfast 9:30-11:30am – Women’s Bible Study 5:30pm – Supper 6:00-7:30pm – Inquirers Membership Class 6:00-7:30pm – Awana Youth Group 6:30-8:30pm – Sr High Youth Group	7	8 9pm – Youth Third Half (after b-ball game) at NLECC	9
10 Women’s Ministry Sunday 9:00am – Sunday School (all ages) 10:30am – Worship 11:45am – F3 - Fellowship, Food & Friends 5:00pm – Youth Talent Show Fundraiser (meal, art show & talent show)	11 3:30-6:00pm Afterschool Celebration Valentine’s Party 6:30-8:30pm – Women’s Bible Study @ JoAnn Nelson’s Home	12 9:00am – MOPS 6:00pm – Tuesday’s Table @ ECC 7pm – Dr. Alyas Masih - Former Muslim Speaker (in sanctuary)	13 9:30-11:30am – Women’s Bible Study 5:30pm – Supper 6:00-7:30pm – Awana Youth Group 6:30-8:30pm – Sr High Youth Group	14	15 6:30-8:30pm Young Adults - Couples Night Out 9pm – Youth Third Half (after b-ball game) at Peace Lutheran	16
17 9:00am – Sunday School (all ages) 10:30am – Worship	18 No School 6:30-8:30pm – Women’s Bible Study @ JoAnn Nelson’s Home	19 No School 10:00am – Mission Links 6:00pm – Tuesday’s Table @ Faith Lutheran	20 6:30am – Men’s Fellowship Breakfast 9:30-11:30am – Women’s Bible Study 5:30pm – Supper 6:00-7:30pm – Inquirers Membership Class 6:00-7:30pm – Awana Youth Group 6:30-8:30pm – Sr High Youth Group	21 8:00pm – Council Meeting	22 Women’s Retreat @ Kathy Graham’s (RSVP by 2/17)	23 Women’s Retreat @ Kathy Graham’s
24 Faith Works Card Shower for NL Fire & Ambulance Depts 9:00am – Sunday School (all ages) 10:30am – Worship 4-8pm – All Church “Ski” Day at Andes Tower Hills, carpool from church at 2pm	25 6:30-8:30pm – Women’s Bible Study @ JoAnn Nelson’s Home	26 9:00am – MOPS 6:00pm – Tuesday’s Table @ Peace Lutheran	27 9:30-11:30am – Women’s Bible Study 5:30pm – Supper 6:00-7:30pm – Awana Youth Group 6:30-8:30pm – Sr High Youth Group	28		