

The Covenant Chronicle

July 2026

Evangelical Covenant Church



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the back of each bulletin, there is a reminder of our mission to “Reflect Jesus Christ”. It invites us to live in such a way that His character, love, and truth are visible through our actions, words, and attitudes. Jesus teaches that believers are called to be “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), shining in a way that points others toward God. This is not about being perfect, but about being transformed as it says in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we are “being transformed into [Jesus’] image with ever-increasing glory” Just as a mirror reflects the image before it, our lives should reflect Jesus’ compassion, humility, and righteousness.

Jesus lived a life of selfless service, forgiveness, and obedience to God’s will. In John 13:14–15, after washing His disciples’ feet, Jesus said, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Reflecting Christ means showing kindness to the marginalized, forgiving those who wrong us, and loving even our enemies. These actions are not merely moral duties—they are visible signs of God’s love working through us. When we live this way, we become living testimonies of the gospel.

When we reflect Jesus in our daily lives, we not only grow closer to Him but also help others to know God’s love. In Philippians 2:15, Paul urges believers to “shine among them like stars in the sky” in a world often marked by selfishness and division. Our joy, faith, and love can draw others to ask about the hope within us (1 Peter 3:15). Reflecting Jesus Christ is both a blessing and a responsibility and it is how we glorify God participating in His mission to bring light into the darkness.

God bless,
Pastor Keith

Mission Statement

We, the Evangelical Covenant Church of Paxton, Illinois, will seek to bring the people of our community and throughout the world to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ because God calls us to do so. In all we do we will serve Christ through individual talents working together to nurture each other in the faith and in Christian love.



Church in the Park

We will have our Church in the Park service on Sunday, August 2 at 10am. Please bring lawn chairs.

Following the service there will be a potluck lunch. The breakdown for who should bring what is listed below. Please contact the church office if you have any questions.

All are welcome to attend!

If your last name begins with letter:

A-E please bring a side or a salad

F-L please bring a main dish

M-Z please bring a dessert



The tentative date for the church softball games is Saturday, August 8 with games beginning at 8am and going till around 1pm at Nelson Field in Paxton. If you would like to play, please contact Brock Johnson. We would like to have a completed roster by July 19.

If you don't want to play, we still encourage you come out and cheer on the teams.

Remember our
Homebound
Members

Paxton
Betty Lesus

July Ministry Volunteers

Ushers

- 5 Glen Foss, Melanie Harms
- 12 Jesse Balk, Ahlden Harms
- 19 Matt & Amy Jones, Diane Gustafson
- 26 Roger Gustafson, Jeff Shaffer

Scripture Readers

- 5 Tanner Jones
- 12 Hillary Sawyer
- 19 Ryder Jones
- 26 Myndie Glazik

Paxton Evangelical Covenant Church Faith Through the Unexpected: A Sanctuary Update

June 25, 2026

Dear Paxton Covenant Church Family,

As I prepared to write this third update on our restoration project, I found the saying "slow and steady wins the race" frequently coming to mind. The journey following the ceiling collapse is certainly proving to be quite a challenge and will clearly take longer than any of us would have preferred, however the end goal remains unchanged: ensuring that every aspect of the project is completed carefully, thoroughly, and correctly. With that in mind, I would once again like to begin by thanking you for your continued patience, prayers, and support throughout this process.

Continued on page 4

JULY Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 Jessica Mills
 - 3 Cierra Grohler
 - 6 Kevin Anderson
 - 8 Janis Carlson
Nancy Riggelman
Carlee Perrin
Destiny Kellerhals
Levi Stone
 - 9 Darrell Abrahamson
 - 10 Willow Jones
 - 11 John Toohill
 - 12 Shari Burklund
 - 13 Cody Evans
 - 14 Glen Foss
 - 19 Nikki Foss
 - 20 Derek Burklund
 - 24 Lynn Elliott
Aubrey Busboom
Kyla Grohler
 - 25 Amanda Nelson
Cheryl Roy
 - 27 Lindsey Gerdes
 - 28 Andy Jones
Frank Brocato
 - 29 David Carlson
Jesse Balk
 - 31 Kurt Edwards
-
- 7 Ahlden & Melanie Harms
 - 11 Ryan & Elizabeth Carlson
 - 15 Kent & Terri Maulding
 - 18 Carey & Shari Burklund
 - 22 Wayne & Gail Ritzma

At this point, progress on the building itself continues to move along at a slow pace. During my previous update, I referenced the need to repair several floor joists before we can move forward in the sanctuary. We have unfortunately experienced several contractor-related delays on this phase of the project. However, this work is now underway and should be completed shortly, after which our focus will shift back upstairs.

As the next step in the sanctuary, the scaffolding contractors will resume work to build a large platform covering the entire area from the front of the balcony forward to the chancel. This platform will serve two purposes; to provide access for ceiling repairs, as well as to protect the rest of the sanctuary from any further falling debris. Until the platform is completed, the loose plaster directly adjacent to the collapsed portion continues to be an area of concern. At some point since the time of my last writing, a small section of that plaster did indeed break free and fall to the floor. This event did not cause any further damage which would change the scope of the repairs. However, it does emphasize the necessity for continued caution as we move forward.

While progress on the physical repairs has been slow, we have made significant strides forward on the insurance claim and planning process. Insurance concluded their initial investigation in early May. The results of that investigation found that, per our policy terms and conditions, the collapse of the ceiling would indeed be a covered loss as it was caused by "building decay which was hidden from view."

Therefore, in addition to the damage below, the insurance claim will also cover ceiling repairs and restoration for the area around the collapse.

While the insurance claim should cover a large portion of the costs associated with the cleanup and repairs, we also know that the church will undoubtedly incur some significant expenses of our own before the project is completed.

During the engineering investigation, it was determined that there is significant evidence to conclude that the entire ceiling has been slowly separating for quite some time. This suggests the area that collapsed was not an isolated occurrence, but simply the first to fail completely. Therefore, there will be significant work required to ensure a similar event does not occur again. Any work necessary in this area will now fall outside of the scope of the insurance claim.

Continued on page 5

Following their initial survey of the building, the engineering firm was tasked with developing a plan to restore the collapsed ceiling, as well as a plan to best manage the remaining plaster. Those detailed drawings were delivered to us in early June.

After significant discussion at both the Trustee and Administrative board levels, we have concluded that the plans as presented do appear to represent a viable option for repairs. However, that does not mean they should be considered as our only available course of action. With that in mind, but also trying to move the process forward in a timely manner, the trustee board is currently in the process of seeking bids for both the plans as presented, as well as alternative method(s) of repair. Once we have more information concerning all our various options, their associated timelines, and the financial implications of each, leadership would then intend to come to the church body with a proposal for repairs at a special congregational meeting.

As this process continues, slow and steady towards the finish line, we are reminded of God's steady presence and faithfulness. We are grateful for His ongoing work among us during this time. May we continue to move forward together, trusting not only in God's timing, but also in His ability to use every circumstance to strengthen and unite His people.

**Sincerely,
Mike Nelson**

NEWS FROM CAMP



Kat and Libbie Sawyer attended Pier 30 camp this month at Covenant Harbor. Here's what they had to share about their experience.

At camp we lived in a cabin for almost a week with our counselors and 10 other girls. During the day we had two services a day (morning and evening), skills, free time, breakfast, lunch and dinner, and campfires with camp songs.

This year during session and Bible studies we were focused on connection. God wants us to connect with people in His community and grow relationships through Him. Because we came to camp this year and last year, we have made so many new friendships through Christ and I am so grateful we have gotten to go this year. We had an amazing time and wanted to thank you all for the opportunity to go.



Evangelical Covenant Church

260 S. Union St.

Paxton, IL 60957

Phone: 217-379-3554

Fax: 217-379-3554

E-mail: paxcov@gmail.com