

# The Covenant Chronicle

A PUBLICATION OF Evangelical Covenant Church of Paxton

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I reflect on the events of the last couple of weeks, I think that we have much to be thankful for. First, we are so blessed that no one was in the sanctuary when the ceiling fell. With all that was going on the weekend before and the weekend after, the timing of this event was divine protection. Second, we are blessed to have support from other congregations in our community. We have had people offer to help with the clean up and others who asked about donating money. In addition, it is such a blessing to be able to meet in the Federated Church building for worship, Sunday school, and our Wednesday night Lenten series. Without a doubt, our Heavenly Father is really watching over us.

While our situation has created many challenges, there are also opportunities to bear witness to God's love, to strengthen our relationships with other believers and to teach our youth about God's provision and protection. These difficulties can help us to grow in our faith and trust in God. They challenge our priorities and remind us that our identity is in Christ, not a building.

I want to encourage us to be praying for our leadership team, for the decision making process, and for continued protection for those who are going to be working in the sanctuary. Pray for our unity and witness so that through all of this, God may be glorified.

Blessings,

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.

*Dear Covenant Church Family,*

*We want to express our sincere gratitude for the incredible love and support shown to our family over these past weeks.*

*Following Bob's accident, your prayers, visits, and many thoughtful acts of kindness carried us through a difficult time. The flowers brought for Janet's 90th birthday made that milestone celebration even more special.*

*Most especially, we are deeply thankful for the meals, flowers, comfort and compassionate support you provided at the time of Bob's passing. Your generosity and presence reminded us that we are not alone and that blessing has meant more than words can fully express.*

*We are grateful to be part of such a caring church family. Thank you for walking alongside us in both joy and sorrow.*

*With heartfelt appreciation,*

*The Bob Thompson Family*

## MARCH Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 5 Joe Swan
- 8 Dean Dillon  
Nautica McNeely
- 11 Tim Abrahamson
- 13 Duane Johnson  
Shannon May
- 16 Terri Maulding  
Dolores Dukek
- 19 Margo Jones
- 21 Jake Gerdes
- 22 Missy Evans
- 24 Drew Riggleman  
Riley Abrahamson
- 26 Kent Maulding  
Katlyn Stone
- 28 Shirley Anderson

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 8. Be sure to move your clocks **AHEAD** one hour the night before so you aren't late for Sunday School or church.



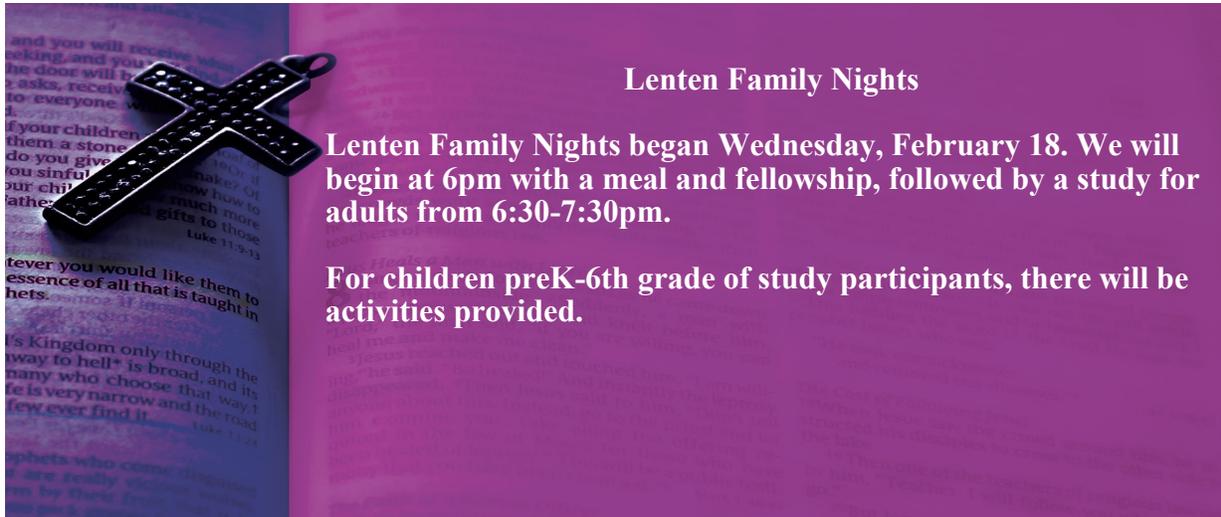
- 6 Bob & Barb Edwards
- 21 Dave & Laurie Eckerty
- 30 Roger & Diane Gustafson
- 31 Doug & Tami Vest

  
Remember  
Our Homebound Members  
Paxton  
Betty Lesus



## March Ministry Volunteers

<u>Scripture Readers</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
1 Diane Gustafson	1 Matt & Amy Jones, Diane Gustafson
8 Alaina Kief	8 Roger Gustafson, Jeff Shaffer
15 Kathryn Sawyer	15 Glen Foss, Melanie Harms
22 Janet Loschen	22 Jesse Balk, Ahlden Harms
29 Willow Jones	29 Matt & Amy Jones, Diane Gustafson



### Lenten Family Nights

Lenten Family Nights began Wednesday, February 18. We will begin at 6pm with a meal and fellowship, followed by a study for adults from 6:30-7:30pm.

For children preK-6th grade of study participants, there will be activities provided.

## Paxton Evangelical Covenant Church

### Faith Through the Unexpected: A Sanctuary Update

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February 24, 2026

Dear Paxton Covenant Church Family,

As you are likely aware, a partial collapse of the sanctuary ceiling was discovered on the morning of Thursday, February 12. Since that time, we have been taking careful steps to understand exactly what happened and what will come next.

While we still do not have many definitive answers, we would like to prioritize open and faithful communication throughout the process. We write today to share what we currently know and to assure you that we are walking this path together in faith.

#### Overview of the Incident

We believe the event occurred on the afternoon of Wednesday February 11th, during which time the building was thankfully unoccupied.

While the exact cause of the collapse has yet to be determined, the initial inspection suggests this was  
*(continued on next page)*

likely the result of the 1920's construction methods used when the building was built, and the amount of time that has passed since then. No roof leaks or moisture damage have been observed; however recent weather and conditions may still have been a contributing factor.

The collapse was focused around the north most cross beam on the ceiling running East to West. This beam was not structural and has been discovered to be constructed of a light wood framing which was encased and finished with plaster. This framing, and the rest of the ceiling backing appears to have been nailed vertically to the structure above.

We are speculating that the combination of time, significant weight of the plaster, extreme dry weather, and significant temperature fluctuations in the attic all contributed to these nails slowly pulling away; eventually allowing the beam to fall and pull down a portion of the surrounding plaster ceiling along with it.

The weight and impact of the falling debris caused extensive damage to anything in its direct path, including several fractured floor joists. Of course, the full extent of other damages will not likely be known for some time.

#### Response After the Collapse

Insurance was notified promptly after the discovery of the collapse and has been very helpful so far in the effort to develop a plan for moving forward.

Insurance quickly dispatched an adjuster as well as an engineer to assess the damage and analyze the building for any further safety concerns. It was the engineer's professional opinion that at this point, the original portion of the building is unsafe due to potential for more of the ceiling to collapse at any time. Therefore, at this time, occupancy of the original building should be prohibited until the affected portions are stabilized and repaired.

Because of this, we must stress the importance of minimizing any traffic or potential disturbances as much as possible. We would also like to reassure you that at this point all damage and concern is involving the ceiling plaster and area below. The overall structure of the building including the roof, walls, and foundation all appears to be unaffected.

#### What Are The Next Steps?

We are continuing to work closely with insurance to bring in the expertise required. The priority at this time is to develop and implement a plan designed to reach the level of safety required for the cleanup and restoration process to begin. Insurance has dispatched another engineering firm that is currently on site to carefully inspect all areas involved and put together a recommendation on how to proceed.

While we know this situation continues to be very delicate and stressful, we must remember that God is ultimately the one in control. We may not know what it is, but this event is likely serving a larger purpose in His grand plan. We must continue to have faith in His direction and continue our efforts to do His work, whether it be from the corner of Union and Orleans, or wherever else He calls us to be.

Sincerely,  
Mike Nelson

## **Evangelical Covenant Church**

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