



The Covenant Chronicle

May 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In a little over three weeks, we will be celebrating Pentecost, when God's Spirit came to dwell in power on the Church. Like Easter, this event is something we should be reflecting on not just one Sunday each year, but throughout the year. We need to be reminded that the Holy Spirit did not just come to dwell and empower the early Church, but to dwell and empower the Church through the ages.

In the Covenant we speak of "a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit." One way to think about this is when you get into your car to go somewhere and you look at the fuel gauge, you have a conscious dependence on having gas in your tank. Of course, dependence on the Spirit is much more comprehensive. He does not just empower the Church, He unites it, He guides it, He helps us to understand scripture, and He draws non-believers to Christ and so much more.

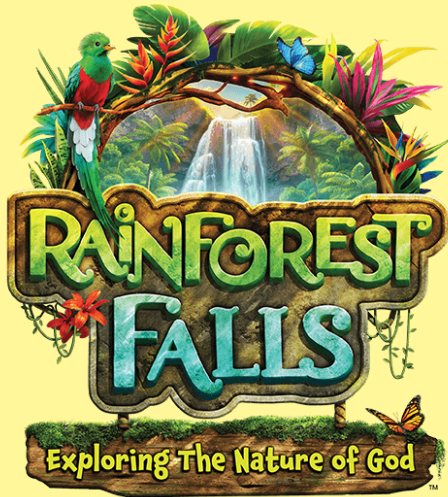
One way to apply "conscious dependence" is that we actively listen Him when we sit down to read scripture, participate in worship, or any other time when we seek God. In an even broader sense, we should be consciously dependent on Him in all areas of our life, our conversations with our friends, our business meetings, and interactions with family. Admittedly, this will feel forced at first, but with practice it will become more habit, like turning on a light when you enter a dark room.

I pray that with each day we are all more consciously dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

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.



May Ministry Volunteers

Ushers

- 3 Roger Gustafson, Jeff Shaffer
- 10 Glen Foss, Melanie Harms
- 17 Jesse Balk, Ahlden Harms
- 24 Matt & Amy Jones, Diane Gustafson
- 31 Roger Gustafson, Jeff Shaffer

We are so excited to be working with four other churches (Methodist, Lutheran, Church of Christ, and Church of the Nazarene) for our VBS again this year. We will begin on Sunday, May 31 at 6pm and continue through each Sunday evening in June. Scan the QR code on the following page to register.

Sign-up sheets are located on the table at the back of the sanctuary to volunteer to help with VBS or to donate supplies needed for VBS. Please help if you can.

Summer Schedule

Sunday, May 24 will be our last day of Sunday School classes. Classes will resume in the fall.

We will begin our Summer Worship hours the following Sunday, May 31 and Worship will begin at 9:30am.

Scripture Readers

- 3 Melanie Harms
- 10 Tonya Durham
- 17 Nikki Foss
- 24 Kathryn Sawyer
- 31 Diane Gustafson



Paxton
Betty Lesus

Paxton Community VBS

Sponsored by Evangelical Covenant Church, First Lutheran Church, Paxton Church of the Nazarene, Methodist Church, and the Church of Christ



Every Sunday May 31 - June 28

6pm - 8pm

At Federated Church

221 W. Center St. Paxton

Pre K (turned 3 by Sept 1, 2025) - 5th Grade

**Register
Online**



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

April 26, 2026

Dear Paxton Covenant Church Family,

It is hard to believe how quickly time has passed since my last update regarding the ceiling collapse in the church sanctuary. With that in mind, I would first like to thank you for your continued patience and prayers during this time.

While on the surface it may appear as if the cleanup and restoration process has been moving at a very slow pace, I would like to assure you that we have actually been making significant progress moving the project forward.

The past 2 months were largely spent meeting with various insurance representatives, contractors, and structural engineers for the purpose of formulating a plan to move forward safely.

Our two primary goals during this time have been to stabilize the remaining portion of the ceiling before any further damage might occur,



- 2 Karen Lichlyter-Klein
Hazel Elson
- 4 Laurie Eckerty
Brooklyn Stafford
- 5 Jared Abrahamson
- 9 Mike Nelson
- 10 Case Maulding
- 14 Jason Johnson
- 15 Amy Jones
- 17 Tyler Waterstradt
Ally Briones
- 19 Bruce Shearer
- 22 David Eckerty
- 27 Carly Mutchmore
- 30 Amie Christensen
- 31 Tayt Siddall

- 3 Ray & Linda Kellerhals
- 9 Richard & Karen Lichlyter-Klein
- 12 Maurice & Janet Saldeen
- 17 Andrew & Cierra Grohler
- 20 Chad & Nancy Riggelman
- 21 Matt & Amy Jones
- 24 Don & Margo Jones
- 29 Randy & Nadine Surey (50th anniversary)
- 31 Keith & Sandy Reuther

Paxton Evangelical Covenant Church

Faith Through the Unexpected: A Sanctuary Update

but also to minimize the risk of triggering any further collapse and/or injury to anyone involved with the efforts. While the situation has proven to be extremely complex, I am very pleased to say that in the previous 2 ½ weeks leading up to this writing, we were finally able to make the transition from research and planning, to actually beginning work on the project.

On April 8th, work officially began with a crew sealing off pathways to the rest of the building removing and relocating all pews to a temperature-controlled warehouse, as well as cleaning up and disposing of all the debris from the collapse.

Once the sanctuary floor was clear, workers began erecting a pair of heavy-duty scaffolding structures which were designed to support the remaining two decorative ceiling beams as called for by the engineer's plans. I am pleased to report that the support of these beams was completed without incident on Friday April 24th.

While the decorative beams have been the primary concern, there is still moderate risk from the loose portions of plaster directly adjacent to the collapsed area. There are plans in place to erect more scaffolding in this entire area which will serve to protect the sanctuary from any more falling debris and also serve as the platform for which the eventual repairs will take place. However, the structural integrity of a portion of the floor where this scaffolding will need to be placed has been weakened when the initial collapse fractured several of the floor joists below. This will need to be addressed prior to any load being placed on this area of the floor.

At the time of this writing, we have the engineer's plans in hand for the appropriate repair of these floor joists and are waiting for work to begin on that part of the project. Once the building has been adequately stabilized, work will then be able to begin on the actual repair and restoration process. Regarding the finances of the project, the insurance company would like to make sure the building is stable and safe before they make the final determination on the exact details of the claim. All work involved so far in the shoring up and stabilizing of the building is being billed directly to insurance as an expense of their investigation.

When it comes to the restoration, the engineers and their architecture branch are currently working on plans to restore the collapsed portion of the ceiling. We are also trying to explore various options for ways to make sure the rest of the ceiling will be safe moving forward. At this time, these options range all the way from somehow re-securing the existing plaster and beams, to the complete removal and replacement of all ceiling materials.

Clearly there is still much work ahead, but rest assured we are making steady and meaningful progress.

As I concluded in my previous update, I would like to once again remind all of us that God is ultimately the one in control. Throughout this process, we must continue to have faith in His plans for our church body. While there may be stress and concerns which revolve around the building, finances, or simple disruptions in the usual form of our worship and ministry, we must lift it all up to Him and remain focused on His mission.

Sincerely,
Mike Nelson

Evangelical Covenant Church

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