



Outside Our Walls

Covenant United Methodist Mission & Outreach Newsletter

July 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS:

July Food Collection: "Meat the Need"

July 15: Lincoln Morning of Service

July 23: Lincoln's Registration Day

July 25: Blood Drive at Covenant

Sept. 26: Blood Drive at Covenant

Oct.: "Socktober" - Sock collection for FWCS Clothing Bank

Nov.: Christmas Angel Projects
*Byron gifts * "Share the Feast"

Nov. 7: Project 216 Event

Dec.: Christmas Angel Projects
* CASA Gifts
* Christmas Offering

Dec. 12: Covenant Craft Show



2 ways to help Lincoln School prepare for the new school year

The first day of school for the 2026-27 school year is August 12!

1. LINCOLN MORNING OF SERVICE: no need to signup, just show up

When and Where? Tuesday, July 15 from 9 - 11:00 in Covenant's Fellowship Hall

What? Trim laminated items, assemble projects from Lincoln's office staff & teachers and "Survival Kits" for office staff and teachers

No need to sign up, just show up and bring your favorite scissors

2. HELP WITH REGISTRATION:

When? Thursday, July 23 for a 3-hour shift between 8am-5pm

Where? Lincoln School (1001 East Cook Road)

Who? 2 volunteers 8:00-11:00 ~ 3 volunteers 11:00-2:00 ~ 4 volunteers 2:00-5:00

What? Help wherever needed, you may sit
Greet families - be the church's presence in the school

How? [Signup here](#) or contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com

Want to be added to an email distribution list to be notified of opportunities to help at Lincoln?

Contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com.



July Food Collection:
"Meat the Need"
Donate canned meat
of all kinds ~
chicken, tuna,
salmon, beans, beef,
stew, chili with meat
and pasta with meat



Covenant Kids are going to camp and YOU can help by **DONATING BLOOD!!!**

Covenant's youth will be discovering who they are as Christians, uncovering God's peace and love, making new friends, discovering their self-confidence, and learning new skills while doing typical church camp activities like hiking, cooking outdoors, swimming, playing games, worshipping, and many other activities!

The Red Cross will make a donation toward our youth's church camp fees for every person who donates blood on July 25th. Will you help make our camper's dreams come true??

Join Covenant member, Gina Loomis, at Covenant on July 25th between 7:30 am - 1:15 pm and help send our kids to church camp ... and at the same time, help patients who need blood donations!

Call Gina today to schedule your donation at 260-438-2801 or [Click here to make an appointment!](#)

The need for blood is constant and only volunteer donors can fulfill that need for patients in our community. Nationwide someone needs a unit of blood every 2 to 3 seconds and most of us will need blood in our lifetime. It only takes about an hour of your time, you'll get a mini-health exam, snacks when you're finished and you'll know you've helped to save another person's life!



A WELL DESERVED AWARD PRESENTED TO MARY ANN MINGS

Mary Ann Mings has been selected by The Lutheran Foundation as a recipient of the 2026 Maxine Rippe Award. This award is given annually to recognize outstanding individuals whose past and present service to the Allen County community exemplifies Christian compassion by alleviating human suffering. The following describes why Mary Ann received this award:



"Mary Ann Mings serves as Minister of Outreach at Broadway Christian Church and Director of the Inasmuch Ministry, where she has demonstrated exceptional leadership and compassion in addressing poverty and homelessness in Fort Wayne. With a prior career managing a multi-million-dollar manufacturing facility, she chose to dedicate her skills to serving those in need, guided by a strong sense of faith and purpose.

Over the past four years, Mary Ann has significantly expanded community impact by helping more than 100 individuals secure housing, supporting thousands in crisis, and creating pathways out of generational poverty. She leads the Inasmuch Ministry, which serves over 200 individuals weekly by providing essential resources such as food, clothing, transportation, and financial assistance, while also coordinating dozens of volunteers and partnering with local agencies to deliver services in one accessible location.

Beyond immediate relief, Mary Ann advances long-term solutions through her involvement with Circles of Allen County, equipping individuals with financial, social, and life skills to achieve stability and independence. She also founded Forgotten Stones, an innovative initiative that connects individuals experiencing homelessness, many of whom have income, with affordable housing and successfully placed over 100 people into homes in 2025 alone.

Known for her deep empathy and belief in the potential of every person, Mary Ann fosters dignity, belonging, and hope. Her ability to inspire others, mobilize resources, and create sustainable change makes her a highly deserving candidate for this award."

As of June 19, 2026, 198 formerly homeless people have been housed!

FORGOTTEN STONES IS IN THE NEWS:

Four Fort Wayne organizations working to address opioid and substance use in the community have received funding from the city's Opioid Settlement Fund Mini Grant Program in the amount of \$10,000 and Forgotten Stones is one of the four.



In the announcement of the grant recipients Forgotten Stones was described as follows: "Forgotten Stones operates Fort Wayne's only emergency day shelter serving adults experiencing homelessness who have some income but do not qualify for traditional housing programs. With this grant, Forgotten Stones will launch a behavioral health integration pilot, embedding licensed counseling, psychiatric telehealth consultation, and clinical assessment capabilities directly into its housing stabilization program."

FWCS Clothing Bank (fortwayneschools.org/families/community/clothing-bank)

The FWCS Clothing Bank (1511 Catalpa St.) provides clothing, shoes, coats, toiletries and other items as needed to thousands of students and their families each year because of poverty or homelessness or following a disaster such as a flood or fire. Students are referred by a school case manager or counselor.

Needed items: Personal hygiene products (must be NEW): soap, shampoo, toothpaste & brushes, tampons & pads, brushes/combs, hair accessories

Clothing (new or gently used): clothing (all sizes, babies to adults); boots/shoes (children & adult sizes); coats; hats; gloves/mittens; socks & underwear (underwear must be NEW)

Leave donations at the Mission Collection Center

ERIN'S HOUSE FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

The mission of Erin's House is to provide support for children, teens, and their families who have experienced a death.



Erin's House (located at 5670 YMCA Park Dr. West; Fort Wayne, IN 46835) works with families to prevent the impact of unprocessed grief. Research has identified a link between experiencing an unresolved death during childhood with poor school performance, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, anxiety, and an increased risk for suicide. On-site and in conjunction with schools and community organizations, Erin's House provides a safe environment for those who are grieving to learn and develop coping skills as they build hope for their future. Families who have experienced a death are encouraged to enroll in the weekly programs tailored for youth aged 3 to 18. All services are provided to families at no cost.

Who is Erin of Erin's House? At the age of six, Erin Farragh died unexpectedly on January 5, 1989, in Fort Wayne. Her family and friends were deeply affected by her loss and while Erin's parents found grief support, her siblings struggled to find the appropriate help. On October 21, 1993, Erin's House was established as the first center of its kind in Indiana and the 32nd in the nation.

To learn more about Erin's House for Grieving Children visit erinshouse.org

Kathy Pargmann, a Covenant member, volunteers at Erin's House and in the following letter she shares some of her experiences:

"Dear Covenant Family,

I wanted to share my experience with you volunteering as a facilitator at Erin's House For Grieving Children. Erin's House provides support for children, teens, and their families who have experienced a death. I started over 10 years ago and after training decided to start working with the 3-5-year-olds. Other groups at Erin's House include: 6-9, 10-12, teens and adults. Working with 3-5-year-olds has been where I feel like I fit ever since! The grief stories are very tragic. How can a 3-5-year-old express those feelings to us? The beauty of Erin's House is the ability to be with kids their own age sharing a similar grief experience and having peer support as they learn their "new normal".

We gear all of our activities to their age level and focus on providing brief bits of joy so they will feel safe sharing their emotions. We switch activities every ten minutes and the kids appreciate the diversity of what we do. On any particular night there could be opening/closing circle, crafts, stories, activities, special rooms like the Volcano Room (where they can let off steam by screaming, tearing up paper and playing games), the Quiet Room (not too often requested by 3-5-year-olds!), the Sensory Room (full of sensory type of play items), or the Hospital Room (a place where kids in some cases recall their last minutes with loved ones or simply dress up and be a doctor, nurse or maybe even a patient). We are not able to offer all of these experiences every night but as a facilitator you pick and choose and then a key word...PIVOT as necessary depending on the group dynamics.

If you are worried this is too much responsibility for you....no worries as you are paired with another facilitator. Group size is kept small and manageable in an intentional way. So depending on the night it could be 3-6 youth in your group. The time goes very quickly and soon you look outside and realize it is time to wind it up for the night. The evening ends with a group song, final announcements and a reminder about the next Erin's House night.

Right now, Erin's House is gearing up for fall. You can commit to a certain night and session either 4 or 10 weeks after you complete training. If you are hesitant or have more questions, feel free to reach out to Erin's House directly (260-423-2466 or info@erinshouse.org) or you can give me, Kathy Pargmann, a call at 484-2498."

Alive Community Outreach's Peacemaker Academy



What is the Peacemaker Academy?

Peacemaker Academy is an intensive nonviolent leadership formation experience for high school students. The 3-week summer immersion becomes a year-long commitment to shaping school culture from within. Using Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Kingian nonviolence, students are equipped not simply to avoid violence - but to analyze its root causes, mediate conflict, and lead meaningful change in their schools & community. The 5th Peacemaker Academy was held June 8-26.

How are students chosen to participate?

Students from the 5 FWCS high schools must apply and interview to participate. They must commit to attend for 3 weeks - all day, every day.

What do students learn?

Students develop the mindset and skills to lead change, including:

- The principles and steps of Kingian nonviolence
- How to identify root causes and systems that produce violence
- Conflict de-escalation and peer mediation strategies
- How to organize and lead peaceful campaigns
- Practices that cultivate internal resilience and emotional regulation

Students engage real issues affecting their schools and community - learning how to apply nonviolence not as theory, but as daily practice.

How is growth measured?

Peacemaker Academy measures student growth through a pre/post evaluation administered at the start of the Academy and again approximately six months later during the school year. The 2025 results demonstrate sustained, identity-level development in student leadership, conflict resolution capacity, and ethical awareness. Six months after participation, students demonstrated:

- A shift from passive to active nonviolence - moving beyond "not fighting" to intentionally creating justice and inclusion
- Increased confidence mediating peer conflict and addressing root causes rather than surface disagreements
- Greater empathy and dignity-centered accountability - holding others responsible without dehumanization
- A strengthened sense of moral purpose and responsibility for shaping school culture

Most notably, **100% of participants reported increased leadership capacity and engagement in navigating conflict and helping to create a safer school.** This is not short-term behavior modification. It is sustained formation - shaping young leaders prepared to build beloved community.

How did Covenant participate in the 2026 Peacemaker Academy?

- Covenant participated by helping to provide food for approximately 100 people (students, staff, interns) which was used over 15 days
- Sisters of the Heart Women's Group provided over \$288 worth of items - coffee & plastic cups, Pop Tarts, mini muffins, Nutri-grain bars, granola bars, Gatorade, coffee creamer and apples
- others at Covenant donated granola bars, pop tarts and apples
- the Mission team used \$70 from Faith Promise Funds for other needed food

By the Numbers: 35% reduction in fights, 280 mediations, 91 student-led mediations, and 100 children served at Christmas

To learn more about Alive Community Outreach and the Peacemaker Academy visit alivefw.org

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU is a part of the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne but receives no funding from the YMCA. They have provided programs for area schools and families since 1992. Their primary goal is to provide comprehensive crisis & intervention services to children, youth & families in Allen County and more:

- they **advocate** for youth by giving them the tools, skills and support they need to succeed.
- they **educate** youth on available resources and valuable tools.
- they **provide** resources by networking with other organization and service agencies in Allen County.
- they **foster** commitment to change by providing insight to problems and realistic solutions.
- they **equip** youth and their families with training, resources and support, enabling them to make changes, bridge gaps and overcome obstacles.

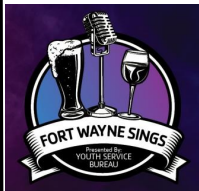
Their current programs include:

Safe place: a national youth outreach and runaway prevention program for young people in need of immediate help and safety; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Safe Place designates businesses and organizations as Safe Place locations.

Homeless Youth Coordination: Critical support and connection to resources needed for positive youth development and life success by eliminating barriers. Assessing the needs of homeless or at-risk youth/families while building rapport through the facilitation and coordination of services.

Youth Advocacy: Youth Advocates provide vulnerable youth with in-depth mentoring, character-building opportunities and assist with academics & career exploration to help youth reach their full potential.

For more info contact Amy Just, Executive Director, amy_just@fwymca.org or 260-710-2288.



Youth Service Bureau Fundraiser - **FORT WAYNE SINGS: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER**

Tues., Sept. 15 at the Clyde Theatre 5:30-8:30. An electrifying event that brings together the power of music and community to make a positive impact. Be dazzled by extraordinary talent and support a fantastic cause - the Youth Service Bureau. Every dollar raised during this event goes directly to the Youth Service Bureau. Visit fwymca.org/fort-wayne-sings to learn more.

Rummage Sale Report ~



A huge **THANK YOU** to Julie Hyndman and Carol Chrisp for their leadership in implementing the Rummage Sale. Julie has reported that just over \$3,300 was made from the sale and will be used to support ministries which will be decided by the Mission & Outreach Team (to be reported at a later date).

Julie and Carol were so thankful for all the donations of items and for all the volunteers. Items not sold were delivered to

- ⇒ the YMCA Youth Services Bureau (for youth aging out of foster care and setting up apartments)
- ⇒ the FWCS clothing bank (kids' clothes)
- ⇒ Inasmuch Ministry (sleeping bags and shoes)

All other items left at the end of the sale were picked up by the Salvation Army.

Core Values of Covenant's Mission & Outreach Team:

- We believe everyone is called to serve.
- We believe the best way to make disciples is by living out our faith with a servant attitude.
- We believe that in serving we are called to do no harm.
- We believe we are called to serve the poor and the marginalized locally, nationally, and globally.
- We believe we are called together to be the church to make a greater impact on the world.
- We believe we were created to partner with God.



For more information on what the Mission & Outreach Team is doing or to become involved in the team contact: Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com.



Caleb & Amy's Adventures in Ministry with Cru (received May 29)

"I started high school as a freshman not knowing anything about Jesus. Now, in the last two years, I've been able to help others come to know him. It's crazy how God changed my whole high school experience for the better just because I came to know him," Sarah, one of our senior leaders said at our last Cru meeting of the year.



Girl leaders at the last Cru of the school year during the "Color Wars"

Our final Cru meeting was bittersweet. Every one of our leaders this year was a senior. Some of them have been serving with us since they were sophomores, leading Bible studies at their school with their friends. They have poured countless hours into being disciplined, growing in their faith, investing in other students, and sharing the gospel with them.

One freshman said, "I don't know where I'd be without you Sarah. You are the reason I know God because you told me about him last fall. I now have peace because

of him." These senior leaders have made an eternal impact, especially in the lives of younger students. It has been encouraging to see how God brings things full circle, especially in the lives of these seniors.

Please continue to pray for these leaders that God would use them in mighty ways in college and the rest of their lives! Thank you so much for partnering with us so students like Sarah can come to know the Lord and spend years investing in his kingdom! *Caleb and Amy Cox*



Caleb, Amy and Julia Cox



Some of the boy leaders during the "Color Wars"

PAST - Praise God for a great school year and all he's done in the lives of high schoolers!

PRESENT - Pray for our summer Cru meetings, seminary classes we are taking, and support we are hoping to raise this summer.

FUTURE - Pray for students in the summer and coming school year. Pray for graduating seniors to be lights on their college campuses and that God would raise up new leaders next year to continue to serve in his mission.

Caleb & Amy would love to hear from you!

Caleb.Cox@cru.org
(256) 258-9537
Amy.Palmer@cru.org
(260) 704-8753
4402 Cordova Lane
McKinney, TX 75070

The Mission & Outreach Team desires to continue to help support Caleb & Amy in 2026.

To help make this possible donate to Covenant's Faith Promise. Or donate to Caleb & Amy's designated account with a donation to Covenant (indicate Caleb & Amy Cox) or visit give.cru.org/0864190

Thank you to all who donate to Missions. You are making a difference in the lives of others!

Two ways to donate to Missions:

1. Write a check to Covenant and indicate "Faith Promise"
 - * the Mission Team will decide where your donation is needed most
2. Donate to Covenant and a particular ministry
 - * be sure to indicate the ministry where you want your donation sent

Ministries Covenant helps to fund through Faith Promise: Forgotten Stones, Inasmuch Ministry, Life for Children Ministry, Missionaries Caleb & Amy Cox in Dallas, Missionary Michael Agwanda in Kenya, Rising Stars at Lincoln School and other needs as they arise during the year.

Questions? Contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com

