

# Thank You!

See that trunk full of stuff? These are the baskets of gifts and supplies that were purchased by our congregation for families supported by Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc. The Service and Missions (SAM) committee wants to thank the Covenant congregation for their willingness to donate toward these baskets for the six families selected by Mid-Sioux for our church. Thank you for helping to make their Christmas brighter this year!

-Jan Bajema



*Gifts for the Mid-Sioux baskets.*



*Thanks to the Children in Worship and the Sunday School kids for sharing the Christmas story with us at the Christmas program on December 11!*



Save the date! On Thursday, January 12, Covenant, along with Amistad (hopefully), will be serving the Community Unity Meal at New Life Reformed Church. Look

for sign-up information coming soon in the church bulletin. If you are unable to work but would like to contribute, we will be accepting donations to offset the cost of food. This is a great way to meet others in our community and the surrounding communities.

-Kris Vander Plaats



# Notes from the Pastor



## A Season of Transition

The month January takes its name from the Roman god Janus, who was depicted as having two faces, one looking forward and the other backwards. One of the symbols of Janus was an open door, symbolizing the potential and possibility of what is to come. With the turn of the new year, we stand on the threshold, looking forward to what is to come and backwards at what has transpired.

Here at Covenant, I sense that we are in a season of transition. Our congregation is changing. From September 2015 to September 2016, we said goodbye to around fifteen family units—somewhere around 25-30 people, or about 10% of our worshipping body. Some of these folks left for job changes, some because they married and moved away, some decided it was time for a new chapter of their faith journey in a different congregation. At the same time, we added nearly the same number of people. Some are still in the process of joining our congregation officially. Some are new to the area, starting new jobs, some are simply starting a new chapter of their faith journey in a different congregation. Add to all of this, we have had a lot of new lives join our congregation this year! By my count, we are up to nine babies born in 2016. Along with the rest of our young ones, that puts us up to nearly 100 children in 6th grade or below. Wow!

These sort of changes can be exciting, but

they can also be scary. That's a lot of turnover in a congregation of our size. We have a lot of new people to get to know, to welcome, to enfold. It can be scary to put in the effort—what if they become part of that 10% that leaves? It can be scary to know how God is going to lead our church—as our congregation changes, so too the identity of our church changes.

In the coming months, our council will try to do some looking ahead—where is God taking this congregation? What do we know? What can we anticipate? For instance, how do we address what ministry to high school students looks like when, in a few years, we anticipate having about 30 students in high school instead of 10-15. How do we work to better enfold new members into our body?

Yet, as the name of the month of January reminds us, we stand on the threshold. We also look back. Part of knowing where we are going requires us to be aware of where we have been. How has God brought us to **where we are? What has God's faithfulness to Covenant looked like in the past?**

**I write this month's Courier article as a plea** for you to share your stories. Help us know where Covenant has been and how God has been faithful to our congregation in the past. I have set up an email address, [covenantcsrcstories@gmail.com](mailto:covenantcsrcstories@gmail.com). The stories you send will be shared with our council prior to our annual retreat on February 4 as a way to help us know what our congregation means to you and how God has used our church in your life, helping us to lay the groundwork **as we seek God's leadership for where God** is taking our congregation next.

-Pastor Kory

# The Word Made Flesh

“Oh God,” they prayed, “put flesh upon your Word  
that woman’s seed will crush the serpent’s head.  
Ages have passed yet nothing has occurred.”

No savior came, they knew not what they’d heard.  
“All flesh is grass,” the gloomy singer said.  
“Oh, God,” they prayed “put flesh upon your Word.”

And then, in Beth’lem, angel songs were heard,  
The Christ was born and given a manger bed.  
Ages had passed but now new life occurred.

**Christ’s birth and death have crushed the Satan worm.**  
We lift our hands to him who is our head  
Rejoicing that God put flesh upon his Word.

But then Christ left with promise to return,  
And now, though twenty centuries have fled,  
**No heralds’ hallelujahs have we heard.**

Return, Lord Christ, your wistful bride to wed.

-David Schelhaas

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## Welcome, Canaan!

Canaan Ray Hawley was born on December 6 to Luke & Sarah Hawley. He weighed 7 lbs, 10 oz, and was 20 inches long. Congratulations, Luke, Sarah, Eden, and Judah, on the beautiful addition to your family!



# January Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Jenni M	14	Michael VP Willem T	29	Josue F Lydia M Don TN
2	Dallas A	16	Rog VH	30	Ben K Jeff T
3	Jo A Paola Gracia Josue & Ana F	17	Jaren B	31	Sos & Kara Maletoungou
5	Andy & Rachel L	20	Jenni B Dave K		
6	Mark & Sara H	23	Stetsen F		
7	Kaden F	24	Vicki H		
9	Lois VZ	25	Jasper F		
10	Bryanna C	26	Jonathan B		
12	Terry F	28	Trena VW		



## Offering Schedule

January 1	AM	General/Building Fund, Compassion Fund
January 8	AM	General/Building Fund
	PM	Hope Food Pantry
January 15	AM	Christian Education Fund
	PM	Justice For All
January 22	AM	Tuition Assistance
	PM	Cadet Sunday at Faith CRC

January 29	AM	Missions Fund
	PM	Bethany Christian Services

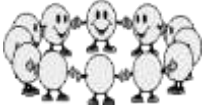


## Evening Worship Schedule

January 1	No evening service
January 8	Teaching Service
January 15	Communion Service
January 22	Cadet Sunday at Faith CRC
January 29	<b>Teaching Service (with Robin's School of Dance and Fitness Dance Troupe)</b>

# January Assignments

Here are the assignments for members to “practice hospitality” this month...  
Remember to wear your name badges!



## Nursery

Parents of the month: Rob & Megan H

### January 1

AM INF Chris & Rin G, Sharon V  
TODDLER Daryl & Deb H, Kurt V

### January 8

AM INF Steve & Pat C, Lisa C  
TODDLER Laremy & Rebecca DV, Mark C  
PM Jeff & Sara P, Eldon & Marcia W

### January 15

AM INF Mike & Laura J, Luanne G  
TODDLER Laura L, Dave G  
PM Adam & Robin F, Kathy DW

### January 22

AM INF Alejandro & Isabel C, Jeri S  
TODDLER Jordan & Aleisa D-S, Dave S

### January 29

AM INF Jake & Trena VW, Lydia M  
TODDLER Bob & Rebecca DS, Barb T  
PM Ryan & Val Z, Lee R

### February 5

AM INF Paul & Ruth C, Barb H  
TODDLER Jason & Dani W, Erik H  
PM Doug & Marge DB, Duane & Jan B



## Coffee Servers

Duane B, Megan H, Robin I,  
Sally J, Beth VB, Dani W



## Greeters

AM Aleisa D-S, Lila S, Kurt V  
PM Adam F, Barb T, Marcia W



## Ushers

AM Shirley T, Dennis VP, Marty VP  
PM Rockne MC, Marv W

## Substitutes

*If you are unable to serve on your assigned date for coffee, usher, or greeter, contact*

Jenni B, Paul C, Zoe H,  
Mark H, Jeri S, Kara T

Thanks for serving!

### Courier Copy—*It's up to you!*

The *Courier* is issued monthly at Covenant church. If you have copy that you wish to be included, send it to the church office. Each issue is distributed on the last Sunday of the month. Copy deadline is Monday, January 23 for the February issue.

Wondering how you can pray for the missionaries that we support? Here are some prayer requests:



phase of setting up services such as receiving donations and payroll for Spanish staff.

From the Crulls:

- Praise God for the first training event in Spain using Dynamic Adventure—the church-planting book project.
- Last week we had an assessment weekend (called Engage) for new staff. Pray that God will continue to bring new church-planters from all over the world to work with us.
- Pray for a number of our Spanish staff members who are raising support.
- Continue to pray for the process of starting *Comunitas España*—currently in the

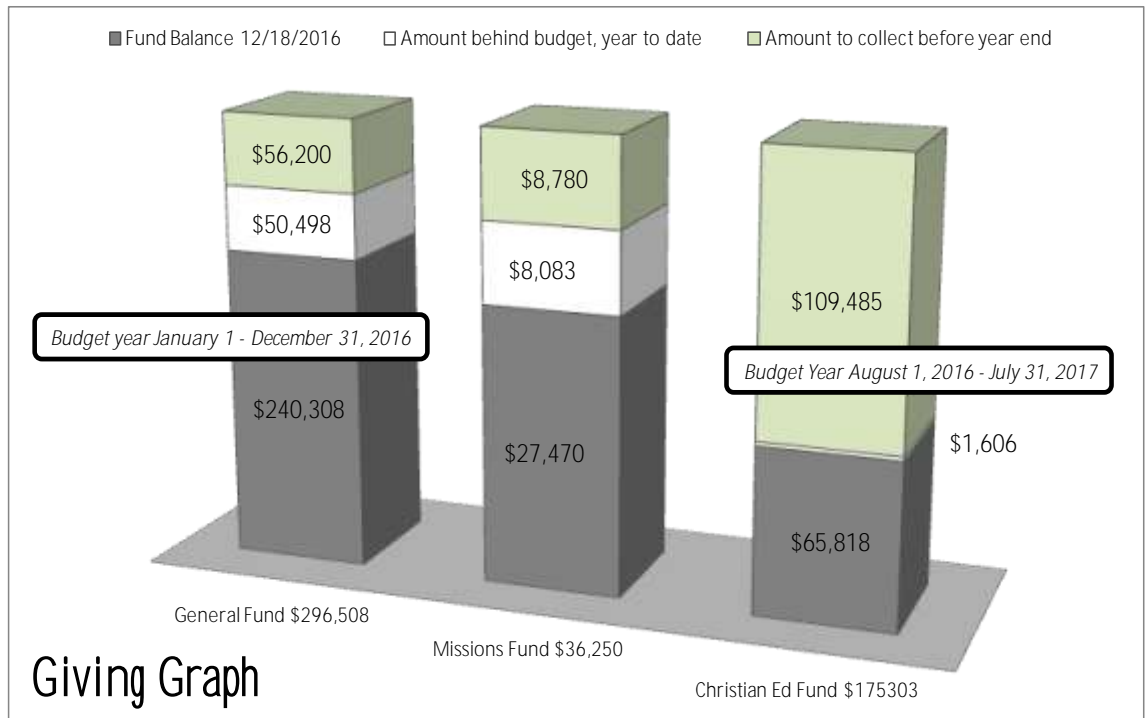
internal and external communication. Pray for creativity and wisdom.

- Pray that Advent and Christmas are an opportunity for us and our kids to celebrate the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy of Jesus.

From the Kuipers:

- **Give thanks that Jeananne’s Coffee Break Bible Study** is going better than ever with a dozen women coming together to study, share, and grow together in faith.

*(Continued on page 7)*



# The January Series

The award-winning January Series of Calvin College is coming to Sioux Center. From January 4 through January 24, Covenant will be one of 50 remote webcast locations worldwide **to broadcast one of the nation's leading lecture and cultural arts series.**

**“It means a lot that we can share this with our community,” said Kristi Potter, director of the January Series. “We are so thrilled it’s been here for 30 years, and we are so grateful to our sponsors who have helped make this possible. Our desire is to keep bringing in these great speakers year after year so we can continue to have these important conversations.”**

The experts will offer informed perspectives **on a wide range of today’s most relevant topics**, including global governance, human rights, race relations, healthcare reform and the gender gap in technology.

Potter says the speakers will not only give

listeners a deeper understanding on various issues, but they will also provide their perspectives on how people can make a difference. With that in mind, Potter says having Eugene Cho, founder and pastor of Quest Church—an urban, multicultural, multigenerational church in Seattle—on the series lineup will provide an additional challenge to attendees.

**“I am excited to have Eugene Cho on the series. So often we talk about how we can make a difference, but are we actually doing it?” asks Potter. “Cho will hold us accountable to take those steps to make a difference. In his book, he asks questions like ‘Are we in love with the idea of changing the world or actually changing the world?’ and ‘Do we just write a check or do we change our lifestyle to help change the world?’”**

The January Series lectures will be video streamed live at Covenant from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM (CST) Monday through Friday. The lectures are free and open to the public. The complete schedule is on page 8.

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## Missionary News

*(Continued from page 6)*

- We give thanks for those who have supported us through our 35th year of ministry through prayers and financial gifts.
- Pray that we will fulfill our fundraising goal for the year ahead.

From the Maletoungous:

- Thank God for ongoing development and hope in our ministries.
- **Pray that our friend, Daouda’s father** would be open to the Gospel.

- Pray for our local brothers and sisters who are persecuted for their faith.

## Tuition Assistance Fund

Are you struggling to meet your Christian grade or high school tuition payments for your children? If so, please contact Lisa Christians or your pastoral group deacon. We have a tuition assistance fund to help families who **aren’t able meet their tuition obligations.**

# The January Series Schedule

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Wednesday, January 4

Karin Maag

*500 Years Later:*

*Why the Reformation Still Matters*

Thursday, January 5

Matthew Desmond

*Poverty and Profit in the American City*

Friday, January 6

Mark Charles

*Race, Trauma, and the Doctrine of Discovery*

Monday, January 9

Reshma Saujani

*Closing the Gender Gap in Technology*

Tuesday, January 10

Abraham Nussbaum

***Tinkering in Today's Healthcare Factories:***

*Pursuing the Renewal of Medicine*

Wednesday, January 11

Gary Haugen

*Until All Are Free: A Look at Slavery Today*

***and the Church's Invitation to End It***

Thursday, January 12

Justin Skeesuck & Patrick Gray

***I'll Push You: A Story of Radical Friendship,***

*Overcoming Challenges,  
and the Power of Community*

Friday, January 13

Todd Huizinga

*The EU and Global Governance*

Monday, January 16

Lisa Sharon Harper

*The Very Good Gospel:*

*How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right*

Tuesday, January 17

Doris Kearns Goodwin

*How Did We Get Here? A Historical  
Perspective on Our Wild 2016 Election*

Wednesday, January 18

Eugene Cho

*Overrated: Are We More in Love  
with the Idea of Changing the World  
than Actually Changing the World?*

Thursday, January 19

Taylor Davis

*American Violinist in Concert*

Friday, January 20

Bryan Dik

*How to Find and Live Your Calling:  
Lessons from the Psychology of Vocation*

Monday, January 23

Jeremy Courtney

*The World is a Scary Place, Love Anyway*

Tuesday, January 24

N.T. Wright

*The Royal Revolution:  
Fresh Perspectives on the Cross*

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Interested in helping set up the video feed, making coffee, and cleaning up on some of these weekdays in January? Contact Pastor Kory if you are interested and able to help!