

Selection Procedure for New Council Members

This year the Council has revised the selection procedure for new Council members. The Council will submit a slate of candidates to the Congregation for approval (affirmation); the slate should include at least three names for each open position on Council. For 2017, there are two Elder positions open and three Deacon positions. Therefore, the Elder slate will include at least six names, the Deacon slate at least nine names.

Members of the congregation will vote after the worship service on April 30. Here is the change from previous years: in the past, each member of the congregation would have voted for nine deacons and six elders, and the names of the new deacons and elders were drawn from those nine deacons and six elders receiving the most votes from the congregation. This year we will use approval voting in the congregational vote: each member of the congregation may approve of none, some, or all, of the Deacon nominees, and none, some, or all, of the Elder nominees. The names approved by 2/3 or more of those voting will be

eligible for drawing on the following Sunday. It is possible that all the nominees could be eligible for the drawing. The nominees approved by this procedure will be known only to the counters (selected by Council).

On May 7, the final selection will take place. The names of the two new Elders and three new Deacons will be drawn by lot. All Deacon nominees approved by the congregation will be available for this drawing, and likewise, all Elder nominees approved will be available for the drawing.

The members of the Council think that this method will have these advantages: members of the congregation have input, both by recommending names and by voting to affirm and/or not affirm persons nominated; approval voting minimizes the popularity contest aspect of previous methods: all names on the slate could be approved and so be eligible to draw on May 7; members of the congregation have opportunity to affirm or not affirm nominees in the vote of April 30.

Feel free to talk to a member of the Council if you have questions!

-Dennis DeJong



Notes from the Pastor



The Start of Something New

What is the heart of the Gospel?

I long ago learned that the Gospel centered on one key idea: Jesus died on the cross and by so doing, he offers forgiveness for my **sins. Jesus died so that I wouldn't have to.** We call this substitutionary atonement.

While this is certainly true, if we stop there **we've missed something. Such a formulation** of the Gospel suggests that Good Friday is the most important day of the Christian year. The idea presents itself in songs such as **Michael W. Smith's "Above All"—"You lived to die, rejected and alone." The entire purpose of Jesus' life in this formulation of the Gospel was his death.** His life mattered only insofar as he lived long enough to perfectly keep the law and therefore was a **fitting sacrifice able to suffer God's wrath in our place.**

Certainly our Gospel story is incomplete without recognizing the work of Jesus on the cross. But Easter is about more than validating Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. In the resurrection of Jesus, we see **Jesus' victory over death itself—captured in many of our Easter hymns: "Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph o'er his foes." In the resurrection we see validation of Jesus' life as a model for how we ought to live, as the apostle Paul directs us in Philippians 2: "Have the same mindset as**

Christ Jesus who... made himself nothing."

These three ideas are all important for a full-fledged understanding of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' resurrection also, though, is the **firstfruits of the new creation. "Heaven" in New Testament thought was not "the place in the sky where you go when you die" but was more akin to God's control room, the place from which God rules over earth.** Contemporary physics has helped shape how I think of this—heaven is akin to another universe—not above or below us, but somehow behind or around our existence. In a sort of **cosmic Mandela effect, we find "thin places" in our world where the heaven's parallel universe breaks through into our present reality.** This divine realm is our own creation, but more real, the truest form of existence, the glorified creation spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15. The resurrection of Jesus in his glorified (heavenly) body on Easter morning is not a one-time event, but rather the first in-breaking of the Kingdom of God, something we continue to experience every time we experience a small taste of the way **things will be. Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits of our own resurrection and guarantees that we have hope for the new creation as well.**

Of course, we do not know the metaphysics of heaven, earth, and our glorified bodies. Our explanations will always fall short of capturing the glory of the resurrection and the extent to which Easter morning changed everything. At the same time, I am deeply grateful not only for the richness of the Christian tradition and the imagery of Scripture, but also for new ways of understanding our world and how it helps expand the

(Continued on page 3)

Thank You to the Lord



Thank you, Lord, for making yourself the center of **Charlie's life**.

Thank you for accepting us into Covenant 38 years ago—a family of five with four of us from the Irish, German heritage, and one from Polish and African-

American heritage. This congregation was something Charlie cared about through his work as elder, deacon, and catechism teacher. The congregation accepted us despite our many quirky differences.

Thank you to Sioux Center Christian, Unity Christian, and Dordt College for educating our children and giving Charlie and I employment and opportunities for Charlie to be involved in the Board of Unity.

Also thank you for the people who have helped me over the last nine years:

- for those who took me to see Charlie in Omaha and Storm Lake.
- for those who visited Charlie at home or took him out for a ride.
- for those who visited Charlie at the nursing home so my exit could be less painful for Charlie.
- for the soup, cookies, muffins, bread, fruit tray, cheese trays, and breads for the funeral guests.
- for the lunch on Thursday and dinner for the family on Wednesday the week of the funeral.

I don't clearly remember who brought the

food but make this my official thank you.

Please remember my sadness for someone who radically served the Lord. Thank you for being faithful to us and for giving us ministers like Kory Plockmeyer and Herm Van Niejenhuis who visited Charlie faithfully these past nine years.

-Pam Adams



Worship Schedule for Lent

The Stations of the Cross prints created by Sam Gutierrez will be set up in the fellowship hall Thursday afternoon through Saturday afternoon.

Maundy Thursday Worship
April 13 ♦ 7:00 PM ♦ Psalm 116
(Nursery will be provided)

Good Friday Worship
April 14 ♦ 12:00 PM ♦ Psalm 22

Easter Morning Worship
April 16 ♦ 10:00 AM

Easter Evening Worship
April 16 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Taize service

Notes from the Pastor

(Continued from page 2)

beauty and wonder of this most momentous day. In light of the resurrection of Jesus, may we live every day anticipating that heaven will break into our life and our world in unexpected ways and places.

-Pastor Kory

April Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Auden M Marty VP	11	Sara E	22	Sofia C-F Stella Ribbens
2	Becky D Brian & Barb M	14	Sharon B	25	Eden H
3	Rebecca DV	17	April Crull Eli H Dylan K	26	Alejandro C Elizabeth P
6	John V	20	Jennifer Kuiper	30	William D Jacob VT
7	Megan H	21	Ruben Crull Adam F Jonas F Nathan Maletougou		
8	Sam E				
9	Sharon D				



Offering Schedule

April 2

AM General/Building Fund
PM GEMS

April 9

AM Christian Education Fund,
Compassion Fund
PM World Renew: General Fund

April 16

AM Missions Fund
PM Bible League

April 23

AM Tuition Assistance Fund
PM Christian Schools International

April 30

AM Amistad Cristiana

Evening Worship Schedule

April 2 GEMS Service at Covenant
(Pastor Bob Pollema preaching)

April 9 Teaching Service

April 16 Easter Taize Service

April 23 Service of Evening Prayer

April 30 Rest (no evening service)

Pastoral Group Dinners

April 2—Friend/Bajema

April 9—Lappenga/
Christians

April 23—Schelhaas/
L. Mellema

April 30—Goslinga/Kornelis



April Assignments

Here are the assignments for members to “practice hospitality” this month...

Remember to wear your name badges!



Nursery

Parents of the month: Mark & Sara H

April 2

AM INF Robin F, Lydia M
TODDLER Jordan & Aleisa D, Adam F
PM Bob & Rebecca DS, Barb T

April 9

AM INF Jason & Dani W, Ryan Z
TODDLER Alejandro & Isabel C, Val Z
PM Jake & Trena VW, Lee R

April 13 (Maundy Thursday)

PM Andy & Rachel L, Marge DB

April 16

AM INF Paul & Ruth C, Angela H
TODDLER Erik & Barb H, Ryan H
PM Duane & Jan B, Dennis DJ

April 23

AM INF Katy W, Cheri H
TODDLER John & Linda V, Mark H
PM Ron & Carol O, Rob & Megan H

April 30

AM INF Don & Sherri TN, Marty VP
TODDLER Joe & Erin E, Kris VP

May 7

AM INF Sarah & Luke H, Nick B
TODDLER Dave & Emily K, Jenni B
PM Tom & Ruth C, Pat K



Coffee Servers

Alejandro C, Sanneke K, Rockne MC,
Gidge M, Jeri S, Kurt V



Greeters

AM Duane B, Linda VH, Marty VP
PM Deb H, Sally J, Dennis VP



Ushers

AM Adam F, Mark H, Rachel L
PM Wil A, Jo F

Substitutes

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

Doug DB, Vicki H, Carol O,
Don TN, Beth VB, Dani W

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, April 24 for the May issue.

Notes from the Deacons

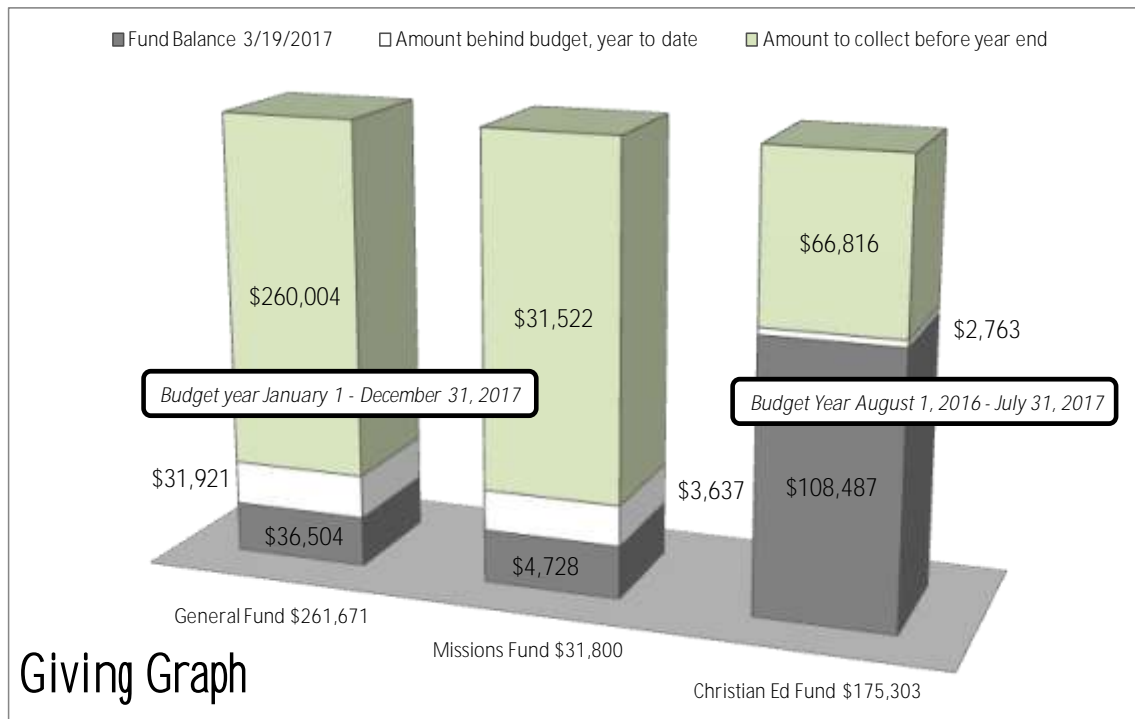
If you visit www.covenantcrc.net these days, you will notice that a lot has changed on our “virtual front door.” After receiving the congregation’s approval for the project at the December 2015 congregational meeting, the council assembled a website committee consisting of Terry Friend, Dane Hibma, and myself. We worked with Vaughn Donahue of Destination Graphic in Orange City, and although there are still some things to be updated and tweaked, our new website is now live!

toral dinner is, view last week’s bulletin, or find out how to volunteer and serve in our congregation, we hope that you can do so easily and efficiently by viewing our website. Most of all, our desire is that our website will be a place where people who would like to know more about Covenant can get a sense of what God is doing in and through our church community.

If you are not already a regular visitor of our website, please take a few minutes to check out the new design! We think you will be pleased.

We want Covenant’s website to be the first place you go when you need information about programs and events at Covenant. When you need to know when your next pas-

-Margaret Vande Kraats
for the Website Committee



A New Name

(Covenant has supported Crossroad Bible Institute—now Crossroads Prison Ministries—and a number of Covenant members are mentors. Here is a note from their executive director.)

Thank you for being a valuable member of the Crossroad team. Because you are a key partner of Crossroad, we want to share with you some exciting changes ahead for the ministry. Since I joined Crossroad about a year ago, we've been on a journey of discovering who we are as an organization. For more than thirty years, Crossroad has been a compassionate ministry that reaches out to men and women on the margins of society.

Our mission is solid, clear and unchanging: We exist to connect prisoners with volunteers in Christ-centered, mentoring relationships that transform lives, prisons and churches all around the world through the power of the Gospel. But we have discovered that, although our mission and identity are clear to us, they are not always clear to people who are newly getting involved with the ministry. Over the past eight months, we have focused our efforts on removing barriers to ensure more and more prisoners would come to know the Lord through Crossroad. During interviews with prisoners, we have learned that our name, Crossroad Bible Institute, has created a barrier for potential new students. Our new name, Crossroads Prison Ministries, removes these potential barriers, better reflects the heart of who we are and aligns our name with what we do.

In interviews with all of our stakeholders, including current Crossroads students, we have

learned that the most impactful part of our ministry is not the lessons or the knowledge students are gaining. It is the letters. These letters from faithful volunteer mentors are a constant source of hope, encouragement and direction. Students benefit most from the spiritual mentorship they receive from their instructors. Knowing this, we are beginning to refer to our volunteer instructors as mentors, a word that resonates powerfully with the prisoners we interviewed.

We have also created a new logo that reflects our purpose: connecting prisoners on the inside with volunteers on the outside through the study of the Bible. The logo has three interwoven



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

strands. One strand represents the prisoner. Another represents the mentor, and the final strand, which is gold, represents the Word of God. When these three strands come together, something miraculous happens. Two people with completely different backgrounds study the Bible together, develop a friendship, encourage one another and are transformed by the power of God's Word as they apply it to their lives.

God is on the move and we are humbly grateful for the work He's doing in the lives of countless prisoners and mentors who have dedicated time to each other and to the study of God's Word. As we look to the bright and exciting future of this ministry, we are dependent on your participation so that lives, prisons and churches are restored through the Gospel.

Lisa Blystra (Executive Director)



Above: Demolition is finished and we're left with a clean slate for the new kitchen!

Below: Do we trust our youth group with sledgehammers? Apparently!



The ladies' team puts forth their best effort to make sure "Ed gets fed" at the Christian Education Fundraiser in March.

Thanks to all the CovenAnts who have been hard at work serving the church this past month! The Christian Education committee did a great job planning the fundraiser and the building committee, youth group, and many others have worked hard on the parsonage kitchen!



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Maddox Dale Van Maanen the 11th great-grandchild of Carol and Dal Apol was born on March 4 at the Sioux Center Hospital, weighing 6 lb 11 oz, He has a sister Aubrey and a brother Brayden. His parents are Brent & Raelle Van Maanen.

We have recently been blessed with two granddaughters! Louisa Rose, Eric and Andrea's daughter, was born February 23 and weighed 8 lb 8oz. Maelynn Joy, daughter of Allison and Tim, was born March 10 and weighed 7 lb 2oz. Oma and Opa, Jake and Trena Van Wyk, are enjoying visits with these families!

Haley Renee Mouw was born March 3 in Kalamazoo, MI to Scott and Tonya. She weighed 8lb 1oz. Her older sisters are Rhea and Claire, who are skilled at holding their sister! Her grandparents are Marilyn and Phil Mouw.