

Congratulations, Covenant Graduates!

Sioux Center Christian

Austen Goslinga

Dream Center works with at-risk youth and I will be their music and arts coordinator.

Unity Christian High School

Willem Taylor

Willem will be attending Calvin College in the fall and majoring in history and pre-law and will play on the soccer team. Sheryl's parents live a block away from Calvin and Curtis' parents are a half hour away so he will be well cared for.

Jacob Vander Plaats

Jacob will be attending Dordt College for Engineering or Computer Science.

Dordt College

Derek Friend

I graduated with a B.A. in Computer Science. **I'm going to attend South Dakota State University for graduate school, where I'll be working towards a Master's degree in Data Science (it's a one year program). I just recently got a part-time job doing some web programming at SDSU (but unrelated to my Master's program). I'll start working in early June, so I'll move up to Brookings in a few weeks.**

Western Christian High School

Ale Castelan

Carlye Tazelaar
I graduated with a Theology degree (emphasis in Missions & Evangelism) with a Spanish minor. Right now my fiancé and I are busy weighing our options for the next step and planning our wedding for May 19, 2018! I have been accepted into the MDiv program at Fuller Theological Seminary, and I am also currently in the process of interviewing for a full time youth ministry position at First CRC in Sioux Falls. Ariel and I are also considering the possibility of doing missions full time after our wedding next year.

Bethel College

Jenna Rylaarsdam

I will be receiving B.A.s in Music and Biblical and Theological Studies. My post-graduation plans are getting married in August in Minneapolis, moving to Dubuque, IA, and working at a non-profit called the Dream Center. The

Courier

June 2017

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Notes from the Pastor



In the Beginning

“How was the world created?”

“Why is there suffering in the world?”

“Who is humanity relative to the rest of creation?”

Throughout human history, we have sought the answers to these questions. In Egyptian mythology, for instance, the world is created when the gods instill *ma'at*, or harmony, on primordial chaos. In Greco-Roman mythology, **evil enters the world as a result of Pandora's** famed box—but even before that, Pandora (that is, the first woman) is given as a punishment to humanity because they stole fire from the gods. In Babylonian mythology, humanity must be brought in from the wilds of chaos into civilization.

We know that long-distance commerce was frequent in the ancient world. The Promised Land was a crossroads of multiple trade **routes. God's people would come into contact** with merchants and traders from far-flung regions, bringing their stories along with them. In light of this, the early chapters of the Bible take on a new depth of meaning. **God isn't just telling the people what happened;** the early stories answer those big questions, but do so in a way not just by what they affirm, but also in how they differ from the stories of those around the people of Israel. There is a sense in which the early chapters of the Bible are polemic—that is, they offer a competing vision of the world from

what Israel is hearing from those around them. So, women are not a punishment to humanity but an equal companion. Humanity is not undignified and uncivilized, but the **pinacle of God's creation. God is not constantly** doing battle with forces of chaos but is the all-powerful Creator.

The first 11 chapters of Genesis stand apart from what follows. The book of Genesis is framed by a structure of genealogies. The Hebrew word is *toledot*. Genesis will say **“these are the generations...”** The first of these leads into the story of Abraham and **God's call upon him. Once we meet Abraham,** the story becomes much more specific. We **are dealing particularly with God's covenant** people. The first 11 chapters, though, stand before the first *toledot* and speak in more generalized terms.

Beginning June 11 and through July, we will look together at those first 11 chapters with an eye toward what the stories contained within tell us about those big questions. Who is God? Who are we? How do we relate to God? How does God relate to the creation? Along the way we will encounter some of the stories of those people with whom Israel would have **come into contact. How does God's story differ** from the stories of others? What does this tell us about who God is? Together, we will see a God who is markedly different than the capricious deities of the ancient world. We will see that God desires to be in relationship with humanity and that God cares about the creation. Above all, we will see the foundational stories pointing us toward Jesus Christ, the one who redeems the whole creation. I look forward to walking through these stories together this summer!

-Pastor Kory



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

George and Jo Faber's first great grand-daughter, Kate Everly Brown, was born to Adam and Jen Brown on her Grandpa Bolkema's birthday—April 1. We praise God for this amazing gift!



Reuben Nicholas Van Dyken was born on May 5 to Philip and Andrea in Lynden, WA. He weighed in at 7 lbs and was 20 inches long. Big brother Gideon (2 1/2) is adjusting well, and grandparents Dennis & Pam

De Jong spent a week there enjoying this newest blessing--grandson #5!

Lennon Cate Baker was born on Monday, May 8, just one day before the 77th birthday of her great grandfather, Len Rhoda. She weighed 8 lbs, 3 oz and measured 21 inches long. Her parents, Heath and Cassie Baker of Sioux Center, and her grandparents, Darren and Dawn Huizenga and Don and Shari Baker of Orange City, think she is pretty special. Two-year-old big sister, Ivy Dawn, loves her to pieces most of the time. Thank God for his blessings!

Thank You, Sunday School Students!

Each year the Sunday School students collect offerings for a different cause. We just received the following note of thanks for the gifts they collected.

Dear Sunday School students,
Thanks so much for your offerings to Promise Community Health Center's #EyesInFocus program. Because of your generosity, children **who can't see very well will be able to get eyeglasses.** We appreciate your desire to help other children in need in the area.

Derrick Vander Waal
Promise Community Health Center



Sunday,
June 4

10:00 AM

Join us for the Sioux Center Celebration Community Worship Service. We will gather at the Sioux Center football field. Rev. Paul Wesselink, pastor of congregational care at Newhall Community Church (RCA) in Wyoming, MI, (Sioux Center HS class of 1967, and a child of First RCA, Sioux Center) will preach and an offering will be received for the Family Crisis Center. While there is some bleacher seating available, we invite you to take chairs or blankets to sit on (and don't forget sunscreen!).

June Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Mark & Cheri H Daryl & Deb H Mike & Nancy VB	12	Troy & Faith Bierma Lee & Jenni M Les & Lila S	24	Alexa C Tom & Ruth C Verne & Gidge M
4	Davey H Sherri TN Dallas & Carol A	13	Joya B Terry & Jill F	25	Logan H Barb T Bob & Rebecca DS Fednel & Kara T
5	Jo F Joe & Erin E	14	Cal J	26	Rachel L Nick & Jenni B Laremy & Rebecca DV Rockne & Joan MC
6	Corrie DV Naomi P	15	Faby C Kurt & Sharon V	27	Steve H & Sharon B Jim & Barb S
7	June B Beatrice S	16	Kyle VP Jake VW	28	Gaby C Howie H Sally J Alyda M
8	Peter F Carlye T	17	Dale & June B	29	Kurt F Ryan H Jasper L
9	Jeri S Adam & Robin F Don & Sherri TN Marty & Kris VP	18	Daryl H Howie & Vicki H	30	Andy L
10	William C Sarah H Mike & Megan Ribbens	19	Jordan & Aleisa D		
11	Amira Ribbens	20	Duane B		
		21	Donna B		
		22	Robin F Isabella H Stan & Beth VB		



Offering Schedule

June 4

AM Family Crisis Center
PM World Renew: Eastern Africa Hunger Response

June 11

AM General/Building Fund,
Compassion Fund
PM Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.

4

June 18

AM Christian Education Fund
PM Tuition Assistance Fund

June 25

AM/PM Missions Fund: Amistad Cristiana

Evening Worship Schedule

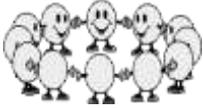
June 4 Teaching Service

June 11 Teaching Service

June 18 Teaching Service

June Assignments

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



Nursery

Parents of the month: Mike & Laura J

June 4

PM Jeff & Sara P, Barb T

June 11

AM INF Jordan & Aleisa D, Dani W

TODDLER Mike & Laura J, Jason W

PM Adam & Robin F, Kathy DW

June 18

AM INF Alejandro & Isabel C, Lee R

TODDLER Dave & Luanne G, Lydia M

PM Jake & Trena VW, Paul & Ruth C

June 25—3:30 PM

INF Bob & Rebecca DS, Val Z

TODDLER Ryan & Angela H, Ryan Z

July 2

AM INF Erik & Barb H, Jan B

TODDLER Doug & Marge DB, Duane B



Coffee Servers

Rebecca DS, Matt D, Luke H,
Sherri TN, Jake VW, Sharon V



Greeters

AM Marge DB, Joe E, Shirley M

PM Ethan B, Robin F, Eldon W



Ushers

AM Luanne G, Ron O, Jeff T

PM Vicki H, Lee R

Substitutes

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

Donna B, Sharon D, Les S,
Del VZ, Marcia W, Laurey Z



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, June 19 for the July issue.

Notes from the Deacons

The Calculus of Charity:
How to raise \$1,000,000 for World Renew
with one simple word

Most writers don't put calculus in the title of their articles because they want the readers to read past the title; alas I am not most writers. I actually believe that mathematics is a beautiful part of God's creation and can be enjoyed by all, but that conversation will also have to wait for another day. Instead my goal is to write about how even small actions can make difference. Mother Teresa said that "we can do no great things—only small things with great love." Perhaps the calculus of charity is a way of summing up a large number of small actions.

First as an introduction, many people at Covenant care deeply about supporting the work of World Renew, an organization whose mission is to "join communities around the world to

renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation around," being compelled to do so by "God's deep passion for justice & mercy."

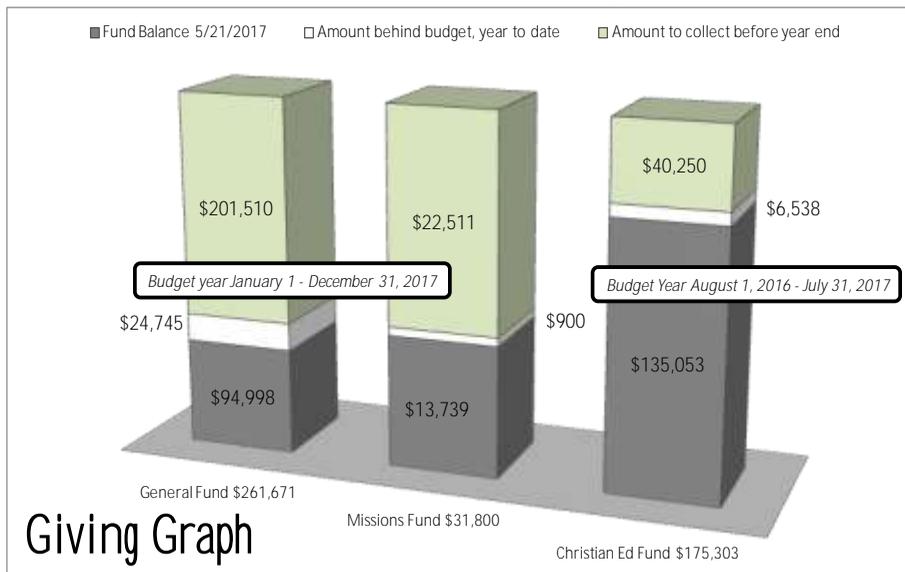
Note that last year we sent over \$17,000 to World Renew to support their work. This is in addition to our budget because we do not specify World Renew in our general budget.

Our prayers for justice to prevail in the world also matter. Ideally, these gifts are soaked and sent with prayers, well beyond the prayers given by deacons during the worship service. We can pray for the shalom of God's Kingdom to come in general and in specific situations, and we can pray for the work of World Renew whose mission is to join God in that work. Recall with me Jesus' parable of the widow and unjust judge. The widow pesters the judge for justice and eventually the judge responds in Luke 18:4-5 (NRSV):

"Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." We can call on God in prayer for justice,

but we can also call on our human institutions as well, even if they are secular. I think we need to do both. In chorus, our voices can make a difference, just as the glut of this widow's supplications finally were heeded.

(Continued on page 7)



Notes from the Deacons

(Continued from page 6)

This parable reminds me, because I'm a mathematician, of the concept of infinite series. One of the most surprising results in calculus is how by adding enough numbers, even enough very small numbers, one can attain very large sums. For example, the numbers $1/2$, $1/3$, $1/4$, $1/5$, $1/6$, keep getting smaller and smaller as the denominator gets larger and larger. Yet, if you sum enough of them, **i.e. $1/2 + 1/3 + 1/4 + 1/5 + 1/6 + \dots$ the sum can be as large as you like, bigger than 1,000,000 if you keep adding enough numbers in this pattern. How can such small numbers sum to something so large?!**

It is also true that by combining enough small donations, a very large donation can be made. What does this have to do with Covenant CRC? How can one word raise a million dollars for World Renew? It has to be the right word, **"smile."** That's it. That one word.

The Christian Reformed Church has about 300,000 members. If each person gives \$3.40, **that would generate over \$1,000,000. Here's the catch, they're not going to give that \$3.40 themselves, they're going to ask someone else to give it on their behalf, each one is going to ask a company to make that \$3.40 donation on their behalf, asking for justice again and again using that one word, "smile."**

If you navigate to www.smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com, you are effectively asking Amazon to make a donation on your behalf every time you make a purchase. In fact, they will donate 0.5% of the subtotal to the charity of your choice, and you can **choose World Renew. It's easy, every time you think of making a purchase at Amazon, type smile, most browsers will autocomplete**

the rest of the web address and any purchase you make will then trigger a donation to **World Renew. To get to \$3.40, you'd need \$680 purchased at www.smile.amazon.com.** Now that seems like a lot, it may take a while. However, even most college students easily spend that on books in a year or two. I can see what my contribution has been over that couple years:



And if everyone in the CRC together made this change, imagine what could be raised. We can together pester the Amazon corporation **which doesn't explicitly fear God, to support shalom in our world.** And the more people who join in, the more small donations will add up, so you can tell your friends too.

To be clear, I'm not suggesting that you spend any more money at Amazon.com than you already do. Part of working for shalom is supporting your local community businesses. But, what I am saying is that if you are already shopping there, then you might as well say **"smile."** **More than that, each time you type "smile" into the web, you can remember the work of World Renew and pray for them.** **Maybe you'll wonder whether you really need to make that purchase and consider giving to World Renew instead.** That one word can change the world, and it can easily raise **\$1,000,000, but it's going to take a large number of small contributions to get there, and that's the calculus.**

-Tom Clark

Congratulations, Jacob and Caden!



Jacob Vander Plaats and Caden Zonnefeld competed in cold and rainy conditions at the Iowa State High School Track Meet in Des Moines on May 18-20. Jacob placed 11th in the 800m, 6th place in the 1600m, and 3rd place in the 3200m. He was also part of a distance medley team that placed 12th. Caden placed 21st in the 800m. Congratulations to both of them on a great track season!

Welcome, Annika!

Annika Catherine Frisch was born to Kurt and Kayt on May 16 at 12:55 AM. She was 7lbs, 15 oz and 22 inches long. They were thankful for **a quick (the doctor didn't make it in time!)** and healthy delivery. Peter is adjusting to his role as big brother.



Joint Worship Service
with Amistad Cristiana
Sunday, June 25, 3:30 PM
(at Covenant CRC)

There will be no 10:00 AM or 6:00 PM service at Covenant that Sunday.

Potluck and activities to follow the service!
Watch the bulletin for more details.

Kids!

Ascension Day was Thursday, May 25, and we celebrate it today in worship.
We invite you to read the story of Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:1-11!

A	T	I	Y	R	O	H	T	U	A
N	A	M	T	I	R	I	P	S	M
S	N	O	I	T	A	N	E	P	E
R	B	N	R	A	E	T	M	R	A
E	A	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N
H	P	E	H	S	H	R	N	E	F
T	T	I	T	P	F	A	V	N	A
A	I	R	U	A	V	E	N	S	T
F	S	S	A	B	L	O	L	R	H
N	E	V	A	E	H	F	E	L	E

ELEVEN	MOUNTAIN	FELL
AUTHORITY	HEAVEN	EARTH
NATIONS	BAPTISE	NAME
FATHER	SON	SPIRIT

