



WWW@Cov (Warm Winter Wednesdays)

WWW@Cov is back for another year! In the cold of winter, we hope to enjoy some great **fellowship together. Here's the plan:**

Wednesday, February 7, 5:15 PM
Taco & Game Night

Come for tacos, stay for games. We're planning on playing a large group game of Wits & Wagers, but feel free to take your own favorite games along as well!

Wednesday, February 21, 5:15 PM
Pizza & Pinewood Derby

Dig out your old Pinewood Derby cars or make a new one—the goal is to give Eli Horstman, our defending champion, a run for **his money! We'll eat pizza together and then** the races will begin! Feel free to stay for the official Cadet Pinewood Derby as well, which will be held at 7:30.

(There will be a freewill donation box out both nights to help cover the cost of the meal.)



From the Elders...

This past Monday, the 22nd of January, the elders enjoyed a snow day! Our monthly meeting was cancelled because of the weather. Actually, we were quite eager to meet, and have not yet done so at the time of this writing, but are looking forward to meeting this evening, Wednesday January 24.

There are a couple of big items on our agenda: progress in forming a search committee for a new pastor, and discussing creative alternative options for our second service. As a congregation you have contributed to the second service discussion by voicing your thoughts at a recent Covenant Sunday Morning gathering dedicated to the second service, as well as by sharing at pastoral group meetings, family visits, and in other ways as well. Thank **you so much! As always, don't hesitate to talk** to any of us on the Council about your thoughts and concerns. We have recorded all your comments and keep them before us.

We are delighted and thankful for the positive response we have had to letters soliciting members for the search committee. We have heard back from almost everyone, and most of you have said that you are willing to be considered potential members of this committee. We will prayerfully narrow down our list of nominees and hope to form the committee,

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Courier

February 2018

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Reflecting on the January Series...

I went to most of the January Series lectures and learned something from each speaker I heard. These four speakers really stood out for me. David R. Williams, a professor of Public Health at Harvard, gave a clear and unbiased explanation for systemic discrimination of racial minorities in the Public Health system. Pashon Murray, an environmentalist and entrepreneur, showed how she is revitalizing city and rural spaces in Detroit, Michigan, demonstrating that we can fight environmental degradation caused by human activity. Jeremy McCarter, writer, director, and producer of *Hamilton*, challenged us to do whatever we can to continue to break down barriers in our society, especially using narrative, between black and white and other ethnic minorities in the United States, just as the musical *Hamilton* is doing today. R. David Edelman, a specialist in Cybersecurity and Geopolitics at MIT, explained why and how the World Wide Web is so vulnerable and how geopolitical conflicts using this medium have already begun and are likely to become the way to wage war in the future.

The short walks from my house to Covenant many weekdays this past month have expanded my awareness and challenged me to do what I can in stewarding the place, space, and time my community and I are a part of.

Thanks very much to Dave Schelhaas and Marv Wielard for setting up and facilitating the often finicky live-stream service!

-Sanneke Kok

I enjoyed all of the lectures I heard. I will give a few comments about each.

Mary Hulst talked about millennials in a way that makes me optimistic about the future church. They feel about the world as I do. They find it difficult to use the label Christian because of the racist, homophobic, and sexist attitudes that are displayed by Christians. I am finding this to be sad but true also even though I use the term Christian.

David Williams spoke about racism that is rampant in this country and presented a lot of facts that I think the entire church should hear. He spoke about segregation and how it was successful in creating unequal schools, jobs, housing, food, environment, and health. It is very sad to hear that this is still happening in our country and we should continue our fight against this form of racism that is so harmful to our brothers and sisters who are created by our Heavenly Father.

Randy Lewis gave us a picture of Walgreens and how they are helping disabled people to live Godly lives of work and fair treatment. I **have a niece with Miller's syndrome who** works for Walgreens and she says it is a good job that gives her time off when she has a medical condition and treats her well. I give praise to this company.

Shane Claiborne argued against the death penalty and its tie to killing so many blacks who are incarcerated. I am very sad about the tie to Christians who support the death penalty and how it has affected people who have

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Reflecting on the January Series

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been treated so poorly since being captured and brought to this country as slaves and this harsh treatment has carried on even today.

John Inazu talked about pluralism and how it has not been achieved. He believes, and I support the fact, that we should be involved in politics to change this and work for racial justice and to work with people of other faiths to do this important work.

Laura Sumner Truax spoke about radical generosity and how people from her church gave money that was given to them to effect changes in society and it changed how they think about the world and its injustice.

Beverly Daniel Tatum told us about why black kids still sit together at lunch and the disturbing reasons for this behavior. This happens because of racial segregation, economic disability, and stereotyping. She spoke about

Black Lives Matter, police shootings of people such as Michael Brown, and how Native Americans are more often killed than anyone else. It was a talk I think we should all hear.

Katherine Boo lived in Mumbai and spoke about how the local people who live in slums are treated. These locals live in the shadows of a beautiful airport and buildings, but live in a system that values meritocracy where the rich are rewarded and the poor are not.

Jeremy McCarter is a person tied to *Hamilton*. This musical has won much success and employs blacks and Latinos as the cast of early American heroes. I would love to see this show and have only seen excerpts on public television.

I most enjoyed Beverly Daniel Tatum's lecture. The lectures are a good place to see people you know and have an opportunity for discussion after the presentations.

-Pam Adams



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Jim and Barbara Schaap joyfully announce the birth of their fourth grandchild, their first in Oklahoma. Olivia Lynn Schaap weighed in at 7 pounds and 14 ounces on Friday, January 19. Doting parents are David and Kristina Schaap. David is a full-time fireman and EMT in Stillwater, Oklahoma; Kristina teaches business English classes at Oklahoma State University. Olivia, their first, will be welcomed, grudgingly, by three cats and a dog. All's well, and all feel greatly blessed.

From the Elders

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which will then get to work as soon as possible.

We are also very happy to report that three new families, the Baileys, the Smits, and the Feikemas have decided to join our congregation. What a blessing!

We elders ask for your prayers as we continue to serve you, our much loved brothers and sisters in Christ. May God bless each one of you richly.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Owen F	13	Dale B Mimi K	19	Dennis DJ Casey S
2	Deirdre E	14	Ana F Marilyn M	23	Karl H
3	William L	15	Dalton H Sanneke K	24	Joey H
7	Wil A	17	Jim S	28	William H Lila J
9	Jane T	18	Joe E Ryan S		
10	Kinza B				
12	Robbin E Les S				



Mission Trip Plans?

Have you been thinking lately about participating in a short term mission/service trip? This seems to be the time of year that young and old plan for spring break or a week at some mission site. There are many opportunities available through World Renew, Justice For All, or other organizations.

If you are a member or frequent attendee at Covenant, please let the SAM (Service and Missions) committee know about our plans. We would love to pray for you and also to help with finances if that is needed. We invite you to contact a SAM committee member (Jan Bajema and Carol Oostra would be good names to start with!) or contact the church office and Sara will direct you to the right person.

-Jan Bajema (SAM Committee)



Offering Schedule

February 4

AM General/Building Fund
PM World Renew: Free a Family

February 11

AM Christian Education Fund,
Compassion Fund
PM Center for Financial Education

February 18

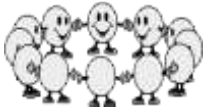
AM Missions Fund
PM Cornerstone Prison Church

February 25

AM Tuition Assistance Fund
PM Siouxland Habitat for Humanity

February Assignments

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



Nursery

Parents of the month: Ryan & Angela H

February 4

AM INF Isabel C, Rebecca DS
TODDLER Alejandro C, Bob DS, Laura J
PM Nick & Jenni B, Mark & Lisa C

February 11

AM INF Trena VW, Val Z
TODDLER Jake VW, Ryan Z
PM Lee & Jenni M, Chris & Rin G

February 18

AM INF Rachel L, Erik H
TODDLER Andy L, Barb H
PM John & Linda V, Tom & Ruth C

February 25

AM INF Luanne G, Sarah H
TODDLER Dave G, Luke H
PM Daryl & Deb H, Mark & Sara H

March 4

AM INF Erin E, Duane B
TODDLER Joe E, Jan B
PM Mark & Cheri H, Barb T



Coffee Servers

Ruth Cla, Cheri H, Rin G,
Mark MC, Jeri S, John Z



Greeters

AM Andy L, Dave V, Jason W
PM Jo A, Jill F, Trena VW



Ushers

AM Wil A, Luanne G, Marty VP
PM Ron O, Lee R

Substitutes

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

Donna B, George F, Zoe H,
Les S, Fednel T, Jan V



Are you interested in serving in any of these ministries, but aren't currently on the schedule? Contact Sara in the church office—we'd love to add you in! (covenant@mtcnet.net)

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, February 19 for the March issue.

Notes from the Deacons

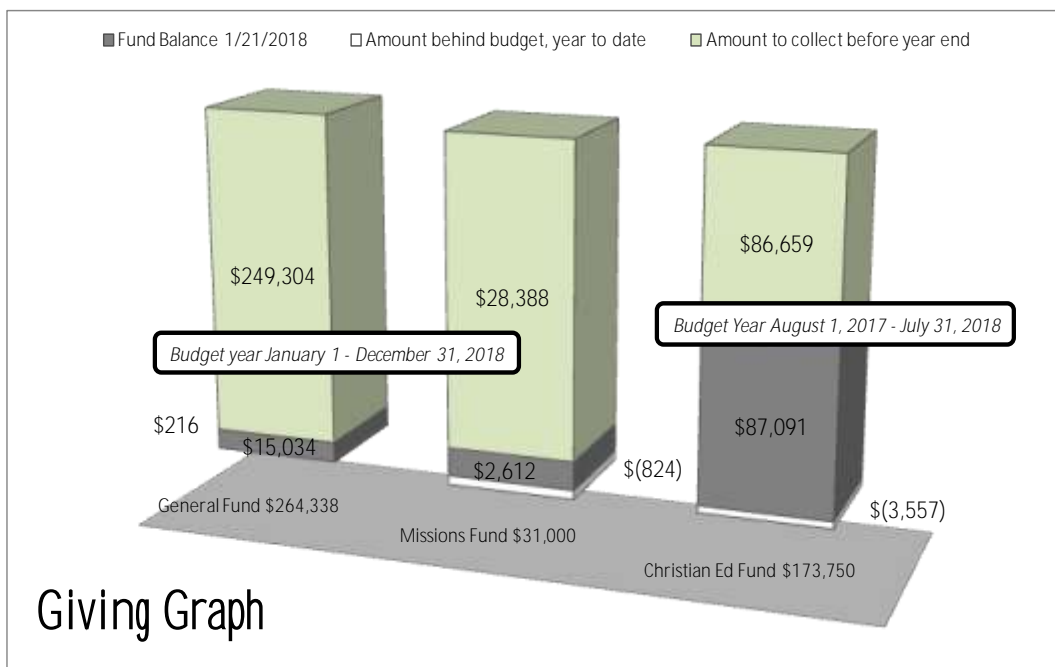
2017 is in the books and, as the treasurer, I wanted to summarize the final fiscal report and reflect on some opportunities and challenges that 2018 and 2019 might bring. I also wanted to bring a note of encouragement from the deacons. We have seen so many examples of faithful and thoughtful giving this year. Together each one of us, according to our gifts and talents, shares our life and livelihood together to make our church possible. May it ever be so and ever more so.

First, the fiscal summary. In 2018 we received \$296,019 in offerings toward our church budget of \$308,471 (take note, this does not include Fair Share/Christian Education Fund gifts which are on a school calendar; it also does not include giving toward outside minis-

tries, World Renew, the Tuition Assistance Fund, Compassion Fund, etc.). Even though total offerings came in below budget, we did get close, which is somewhat encouraging to me because we had written the 2017 budget with the goal of it being more accurate to the actual giving of our church. Another item worth noting is that in many areas we under-spent our budget, e.g. pastoral compensation, building maintenance, and various other smaller categories. This made it possible to support various outside ministries through our ministry shares above what we had budgeted. In total, we sent \$69,869 to the classis and the denomination. This was more than the \$57,619 we had budgeted for, but less than the \$89,758 requested.

Now, some reflections. I like to think of three main ways that the offerings our church receives help us do ministry in the world. First,

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Notes from the Deacons

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through our local ministry to those in and connected to our church. These offerings keep the lights on in church, the carpets vacuumed, the Word preached, the worship service planned, the bulletins printed, the Sunday school curriculum ordered, the Courier in the mailboxes, and the e-mails delivered promptly and sincerely to your inboxes, to name just a few. Second, through our support of ministries that are external to our church like missionaries and mission organizations, Amistad Christiana, and many others. Third, through supporting the Christian schools in our area that do the hard work of helping the youth in our community to see that all aspects of life come under the rule and reign of Christ and that we can worship and glorify God through learning about the world around us. Of course, there is overlap in many ways. Nevertheless, I think the three categories can be helpful.

One challenge we will face this year and next is to determine how much of each to support. Some say that we should support external ministry first and foremost through supporting missionaries and ministry shares and make cuts to local ministry in order to make that happen. Others say that our first obligation is to the discipleship of our own congregation and, if we are not able to meet the other requests, then so be it. There are others that want to do all the things well. They might say that we need to challenge ourselves to give more generously to do all fully. This year the deacons will be pondering this question throughout the year, and prepare for tough decisions in December. We invite you to share your passions and visions for our church with

us so we may make wise and well-informed decisions when the time comes.

Finally, a few members of the congregation have asked about how they might divide their giving. This is a tricky question and there is not consensus on how to answer it, but I will venture one answer for those who are asking.

If we call “tithes” our gifts in support of our church’s budgeted ministry and “offerings” as our gifts in support of non-budgeted ministries, then, according to our budget, one would split the “tithes” as follows:

General Fund: 55%
Missions Fund: 7%
Building Fund: 3%
Christian Education/Fair Share: 35%

We encourage you to consider giving to other ministries as well, but leave it up to you how **to divide your “offerings,” for example special offerings for outside ministries like World Renew, Justice For All, the Tuition Assistance Fund, the Compassion Fund, etc.** Because everyone has different circumstances we resist offering a formula beyond those general guidelines; we would simply encourage everyone to give generously and with a cheerful heart, not out of obligation, but with joy that the kingdom of God may grow.

-Tom Clark
Treasurer of Deacons



GEMS Update



The GEMS girls participated in our annual theme night on January 10. Our theme is "In His Steps" based on 1 John 2:6. The girls were welcomed to come on a camping trip as we walked through what it means to receive God's love and to live like Him. The girls enjoyed games, a campfire snack, and talking together in small groups.



Before our Christmas break, many boxes were filled for Operation Christmas Child. This is a wonderful hands on way to live out God's love.



Belle at Covenant...

You may have missed it, but in case you haven't noticed, there's a Disney princess in our midst! Congratulations to our own Kate Henreckson for landing the leading part of Belle in the Tulip Festival production of *Beauty and the Beast*!



While Kate is busy memorizing lines, singing, and brushing up on her dancing skills, we encourage you to grab tickets for the show. It will be held May 15-19 (including an earlier time on the 15th) and tickets go on sale January 29 at the Tulip Festival office. Check out www.octulipfestival.com for more information.