

# Farewell to the Halls

At Covenant, where people come and go quite quickly, largely because of job changes, it's an even greater loss when someone leaves after 47 years of significant involvement.

Howie and Vicki Hall will leave us on March 30 when they move to the Minneapolis area to live near three of their five sons.

I sat down with them Monday in their home, not to play pinochle as Dave and I often do, but to ask them to talk about their years at Covenant.

Howie and Vicki are charter members of Covenant. When they moved from Orange City for Howie to take a position as admissions director at Dordt College, they joined a group from First CRC to start a new church. "What drew you to this new endeavor?" I asked. They responded that it was the people in that first group, their excitement, the opportunity to build a fresh worship style, and a strong sense of reaching out to new people in the community. "It was a happy place," said Howie. "People were really outgoing in the new congregation and everyone was involved."

Howie and Vicki have been actively involved in the life of Covenant through the years, appreciative of the service of others and positive about new directions in the church. The first Covenant baby shower was at Vicki's

house. Vicki was a regular organist from 1971 to 1997. She also led Sunday School music occasionally. Rebecca De Vries remembers as a third grader that Vicki's favorite song was, or so she thought at the time, "Oh, Howie loves you and me." Howie and Vicki led hymn sings before the evening service ("songs we knew so we could go from one to the other without announcing and without books"), and both sang in the choir. Howie was an elder more than once and taught catechism.

But what most of us will remember about the Halls is their wonderful hospitality. Howie said that when he woke up on Sunday morning, his first question to Vicki was not, "How did you sleep?" but "Who's coming for dinner today?" The first Sunday we five Schelhaases visited Covenant in 1988 the Halls invited us to dinner. Vicki had also invited a friend the same age of each of our three children so that when they started school the next week, they would have at least one friend. That helped a

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Courier

April 2018

COVENANT  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

# From the Elders...

Dear Covenant sisters and brothers,

On Monday, March 18, the elders and deacons had a Full Council meeting. I want to share a picture that materialized in my mind as we were busy reporting and discussing. It is a picture of an onion. Let me tell you how I got there.

A Council meeting begins with Scripture and prayer. We then move on to a report from the president of the Council. Next, the clerk reports on what's been going on in his area of responsibility. After that come reports from the deacons concerning finances. Finally we get the "Committee Reports." On the night of our meeting, we heard from Council representatives of the following committees: Building, Christian Education/Fair Share, Fellowship, Education, Missions (SAM), Small Groups, Worship, and Youth Ministries. In addition to these continuing committees, we heard a report from the elder and deacon on the Search Committee. The Council member who reported on projects and developments in each one of these committees is not necessarily the chairperson of this group. He or she is a member and the group is made up of and led by many of you in the congregation. As we continued to hear reports and names of people involved in various ministries engaged in by the people on these committees, I was struck by how much is going on in our congregation and by how many people are volunteering time, talents, and money to reach out with the love of Christ to those within and beyond our congregation. That's how I came to the onion.

The outer layer of the onion was the group of people assembled for our meeting that night. As they reported, we heard about the activities of many more layers of the onion—the committees listed above. Under each committee layer are more layers, consisting of individuals who make up the juicy bits of the onion. Just as the onion keeps on going deeper as you unpeel it, so the involvement of countless numbers of you is revealed. Thanks be to God for all of you and for all of the gifts you bring to our fellowship.

Speaking of gifts, the Council also compiled a list of nominees who we hope will allow their names to stand as possible candidates for the office of elder and deacon in the upcoming elections for Council members. I invite you to consider the onion and yourself as an integral layer of it.

May God be good to us all, dear brothers and sisters, as we look forward to the blessings of Jesus' resurrection and the coming of spring!

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

## Maundy Thursday Worship Service



**Thursday**  
**March 29, 2018**  
**7:00 PM**

The service will include a celebration of the Lord's Supper and Rev. John Lee will give a meditation. Nursery will be provided.

## Farewell to the Halls

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lot, and we never visited another church.

No one plans a large crowd party like Vicki. And the hospitality of their backyard pool: pool parties for couples and young families, early summer afternoon exercises for women, later afternoon open swim time for grandmas and moms with kids. Corrie De Vries said, "And Vicki always came out with treats." Howie wants to tell Ryan and Val Zonnefeld, new owners of their home, that "the first 3 weeks of pool season you will hate the work, but after that you will love watching folks have fun." No pressure, Ryan and Val.

Vicki said that when she gave up organ playing for services, she committed herself to encouraging members through notes and prayer. We all have experienced the encouraging words of the Halls. Today again they both expressed delight for the talents within the congregation, the skills evident in leadership, and the willingness of people to work hard in the church. Among the particular people they mentioned was Doug De Boer who set up the loop system to enable better hearing. "After that," said Howie, "I could hear the minister

breathe."

It is not easy for Howie and Vicki to leave, but they have faith that God is leading them as He always has. They want to stay connected to Covenant, and they ask for our prayers for their health, for finding a new church home and for an available apartment in the retirement village they have chosen, Mc Kenna's Crossing in Prior Lake, Minnesota.

I asked them to give us some parting wisdom. Howie said, "Care about what's going on in each other's lives," and Vicki said, "Be hospitable. It's fun to get to know people." They promise to pray for us as we seek a new pastor.

It's not easy for us to see them go either. We'll miss seeing them sitting in church, fifth row center. Vicki will play the offertory in the service Palm Sunday evening. She has chosen "It Is Well with My Soul." They will worship with us Maundy Thursday, and then Friday they will take off. Their temporary address is: 1681 Avocet Ln, Mound, MN, 55364-1101.

God speed, old pals. You will be sorely missed.

-Jeri Schelhaas

## Our True Worship Leader

I appreciated Dr. Bailey's sermon last week on Christ as our great high priest. It brought me back to a quote from *The Worship Architect* by Constance Cherry, a book I read for a course on worship:

"There is something profoundly liberating in submitting to Christ as priest. We still design and lead worship; we still gather to offer worship, but we do so humbly, bringing our best offering and intentions to the

Great High Priest who transforms our human efforts perfectly. [We] place our worship before Christ, who will in turn place it before God. The great burden of performing everything perfectly by our own genius or powers is lifted from our shoulders and placed on the shoulders of Christ. This is a burden he will lift from us. (30).

We talk about Christ as mediator, the one who ever lives and pleads for us, sinners, taking our imperfect selves and presenting them

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# April Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



## Offering Schedule

### April 1

AM General/Building Fund  
PM World Renew: World Hunger

### April 8

AM Christian Education Fund,  
Compassion Fund  
PM (GEMS Sunday at Faith CRC)

### April 15

AM Missions Fund  
PM Hope Haven

### April 22

AM Tuition Assistance Fund  
PM Resonate Global Mission

### April 29

AM General Fund Outreach Commitments

## Evening Worship Notes

We will join Faith CRC for GEMS Sunday on **April 8** at 6:00 PM. There will be no service here at Covenant.

The Valley Male Chorus will be at Covenant on Sunday evening, **April 15!**

Sunday, **April 29** is a fifth Sunday of the month, so we will not have an evening service that day. We encourage you to fellowship with your small groups, pastoral groups, or to visit Amistad Cristiana that day.

## Pastoral Group Dinner Schedule

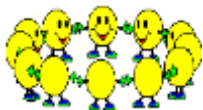
April 8—Friend/Bajema  
April 15—Kok/Christians  
April 22—Schelhaas/  
Mellema  
April 29—Holtrop/Oostra



# 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 1

AM INF Megan H, Ryan H  
TODDLER Rob H, Angela H  
PM Jeff & Sara P, Lee R

### April 8

AM INF Robin F, Laura L  
TODDLER Adam F, Emily S

### April 15

AM INF Dave S, Jenni B  
TODDLER Jeri S, Nick B  
PM Dennis & Pam DJ, Paul & Ruth C

### April 22

AM INF Sherri TN, Mark C  
TODDLER Don TN, Lisa C  
PM Laremy & Becca DV, Ron & Carol O

### April 29

AM INF Isabel C, Lee M  
TODDLER Alejandro C, Jenni M

### May 6

AM INF Rebecca DS, Chris G  
TODDLER Bob DS, Rin G, Laura J  
PM Jake & Trena VW, Tom & Ruth C



## Coffee Servers

Ana F, Sarah H, Mark H,  
Rachel L, Linda VH, Sharon V



## Greeters

AM Rob H, Jeff T, Marcia W  
PM Pam DJ, Kathy DW, Len R



## Ushers

AM Dave G, Rockne MC, Sherri TN  
PM Daryl H, Kris VP

## Substitutes

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

Sharon D, Sally J, Don TN,  
Kara T, Stan VB, Del VZ



## 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 23** for the May issue.

# Notes from the Deacons

## Covenant 'FOSSILs'

What's the first image that comes to mind when you hear fossil; a dinosaur skeleton, an extinct species, something without life? Or perhaps you think of an individual set in his or her ways.

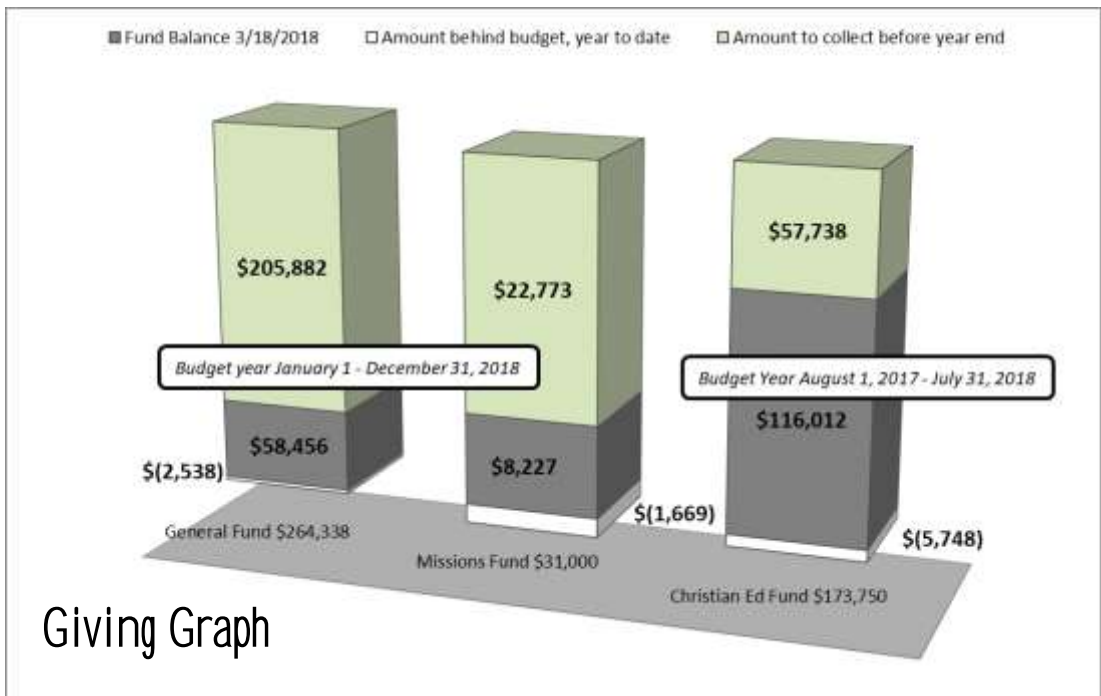
If any of the above come to mind, you may have been wondering about Covenant notices for monthly FOSSIL meetings. Hopefully, you will realize that the acronym, FOSSIL, is a playful spoof of actual fossils and of the derogatory slur used for seniors. Covenant FOSSILs are Friends Over Sixty Serving In Love.

The idea for initiating such a group came from discussions that the Covenant deacons have had as we examined the demographics of Cov-

enant and the challenges that come as members age in our congregation. But the deacons soon realized that in addition to facing challenges, aging Covenant members are still actively involved in serving within and outside of the congregation. That opportunity to serve each other, the congregation as a whole, and others in the community brings us together.

While we do enjoy a monthly social, typically a meal together on the last Monday evening of the month, we also want to use the diverse background of our group in service too. This past month, Wil Alberda has encouraged each FOSSIL member to write down a story. We have been asked to write about individual formative events that have shaped our faith, our journeys, and our outlooks on life. We hope to share those stories with the congregation. Among a list of possible activities, we have also been encouraged to create a

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# Search Committee Update

The work of the Pastoral Search Committee is moving forward at a good pace. To this point, we have had three productive meetings. A summary of our work follows.

Using the surveys completed by members of the congregation as well as comments from pastoral group discussions, we have completed both the Covenant Church Profile and compiled a list of characteristics that Covenant desires in its next pastor. The profile is a description of our church body. The profile includes information regarding the Sioux Center community; demographic data of our congregation; a description of our worship services, budget, and facilities; a summary of the characteristics of our congregation; and a description of the goals and future direction of Covenant CRC. The list of characteristics should be helpful in the pastor interview and selection process.

The committee, in consultation with the council, has also worked on a job description for our next pastor and has written an advertisement intended to interest potential pastors in serving at Covenant. We will be advertising in the Banner beginning in May.

With input from Covenant members, we have compiled an initial list of 59 potential pastors. We are currently in the process of gathering more information regarding those on the list. A list of 59 pastors may seem to be more than enough; nevertheless, we ask the congregation for additional names. If you have names of potential pastors you would like the committee to consider, please give them to a member of the Pastoral Search Committee.

Finally, we ask for your prayers that God will bless the process we are following and that He will lead and guide us to our next pastor.

-Dennis Vander Plaats

*Need a reminder about who is on the search committee? Here is a list of names to pray for as we seek to find Covenant's next pastor: Dennis Vander Plaats (chair), Anna Christians, Pat Crull (deacon representative), Bob De Smith, Adam Fedders, Josuè Feliciano, Dane Hibma, Steve Holtrop (elder representative), Mike Janssen, Rachel Landman, Jeri Schelhaas, and Kris Vander Plaats.*

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## Notes from the Deacons

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'needs' box. By having Covenant members share needs we can become more aware of existing needs and how we might serve in meeting some of those needs too.

FOSSIL is active, loving, and full of life!

-Chris Goedhart

## Spring Church Clean-Up

Saturday, May 5 is the date for our annual church cleaning. We will begin working at 8:30 AM and are asking for many hands as there are some special projects we would like to complete. We need four people to scrape the SW entrance wall going to the basement. It will then be repaired and painted later. We also need the outside church windows scraped and repainted. We will need some extra hands to backfill and reseed along the new sidewalks as this is a liability issue for our church. We will also clean the inside of all the rooms in the church as we usually do.

We could use four pans of bars or cookies for all the hard workers that come out to help. Let the building committee know if you would be able to bring some!

This is a good bonding experience for all ages of our church! Please contact Marcia Westra or Dave Kramer with any questions.

## Serving at Covenant

Many years ago, Dallas Apol encouraged me to begin a Young Children in Worship program at Amistad Cristiana, and so began this continuing ministry. Our first groups ranged in age from 3 or 4 years old through 8th grade! Now we have several age groups serving Amistad children.

It has been an incredible blessing as I have continued with Amistad's children for over 20 years. Young Children in Worship leadership includes two other gals now, plus our helpers. The children and adults from Amistad Cristiana are my dear friends as we learn, pray, and show concern and love for each other.

Come to a Sunday afternoon service and experience the hospitality and love of Amistad Cristiana!

-Marilyn Mouw

## Our True Worship Leader

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as perfect before the father. But I don't immediately connect that to my acts of planning and leading or our acts as a gathered body on Sunday.

As Priest, it is Jesus who leads our worship. Cherry says, "The author of Hebrews uses the Greek term *leitourgos* for Christ—'the leader of our worship' (Heb 8:2). As our leader, Jesus transforms the imperfect *leitourgia* (work of the people) into that which pleases God" (30). *Leitourgia*, where we get our word liturgy.

I'd be lying if I said I hadn't felt some extra weight on my shoulders since Pastor Kory left. Imagining Christ as our true worship leader

and the lifter of our burdens was so good for me. I imagine Jesus taking from me a pile of liturgies, schedules, rehearsal notes, emails, prayers, and fears, and placing them on his shoulder. On the other shoulder he stacks some hymnals and sheet music, a broken projector and an out of tune piano. He takes all this *leitourgia* and enters the Holy of Holies. He tidies up the papers, edits the prayers, tunes up the piano and my heart, and lays it all down at the Father's feet, who then looks on him and pardons me. Us.

"The joy of this truth," Cherry concludes, "allows us to worship God with full abandon, perhaps as never before."

-Rebecca De Vries