

Cara's Travels

The day after graduation, myself, twelve other students, and two professors hopped onto an airplane at 5:30 AM to take off for a community-based research trip that we had been preparing for the entire semester. The location: Pignon, Haiti, for two weeks, with the organization Many Hands For Haiti (MH4H).

While we were in Haiti, we had the opportunity to do a variety of things for MH4H. We poured a cement floor with a Haitian team, delivered food to community members that the MH4H's chaplains had discerned truly needed it, and dug at least 50 holes for banana trees to be planted in. We also got to play soccer with the local kids, visit the Citadel (a historical Haitian fortress), and take lots of trips in the back of a pickup. But our main focus while we were with MH4H was research.

What kind of research do you do in Haiti, you ask? Most of the research we did was surrounding a program called Première Mil Jou (First Thousand Days). This program focuses on nutrition, education, health, and brain development of children and their caregivers from conception to the age of two. This program offers a meal five days a week to caregivers and their children in the community and teaches classes to the caregivers about how to better take care of their child and themselves.

For our research, we spent most of our time interviewing two different groups of people. The first group was the management staff of the MH4H organization. This staff is made up of Haitian and American managers who each oversee one of the programs that MH4H is doing. These programs include leadership, education, building and projects, and organization. These interviews were conducted to gain a better understanding of all the programs and any insights that the managers had about Haitian culture in general. We were able to learn about MH4H's reputation in the community, how the Première Mil Jou program was running, and areas of growth in each respective program. The other group of people that we had the chance to interview was the participants of the Première Mil Jou program. These interviews produced valuable information about how the community was understanding the program, areas that participants



(Continued on page 8)

Courier

July 2018

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

From the Elders...

Greetings from Grand Rapids, Covenant sisters and brothers! At the time of this writing, I have been out of town for a week and a half, attending, as an elder delegate from Classis lakota, the 2018 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). That's our full name and it reminds us that we are a bi-national church. Besides CRCs in the United States and Canada, there is an Iglésia Cristiana Reformada in the Dominican Republic as well. I learned this while hearing the agenda for business for the advisory committee on which I served as a delegate to synod, the Interdenominational Affairs Committee. This denomination has more than 200 congregations. Who planted these congregations? Decades ago, people from the DR listened to Reverend Juan Boonstra, the Spanish language minister for "The Back to God Hour" at the time. The Holy Spirit convicted them of the truth of the gospel they heard in these radio broadcasts, and they formed first one small church, and then kept planting new churches as the Spirit led them! This denomination is interested in developing closer ties with the CRCNA and one of the items on the agenda of

my committee was to respond to their overture. The CRCNA has an Ecumenical Charter, which "recognizes [the CRCs] ecumenical responsibility to cooperate and seek unity with all churches of Christ in obedience to the gospel." Synod later accepted our recommendation to grant this denomination the status of "churches in dialogue." This means that the CRC will actively explore closer ties with this denomination, possibly resulting in the status of "churches in ecclesiastical fellowship," which is the closest relationship the CRC has with another denomination.

Meanwhile, back in Sioux Center, your elders have been busy with the work entrusted to them. As usual, we very much desire your prayers for the Holy Spirit's presence in and among us. We pray that the Spirit will be present in each one of your lives too, leading you, in your daily routines to honor our gracious God and loving Lord. As elders we continue to work with the Search Committee, trusting that God has good things in store for us. May God give safe travel and wonderful experiences to all of us who have plans or are currently traveling.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

Honorable Mention

I recently had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Calvin College informing the Council that Caden Zonnefeld had earned an Honorable Mention in the essay competition for the 2018 Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Award. The letter mentioned that all the papers were "fine contributions" and thanked Council for the "important part you are playing in the

faith-development of your young people".

I think that all members of the Covenant congregation contribute to the faith growth of our young people. Thank you for that! The letter is signed by the Presidents of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College as well as the Director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies.

-Dennis De Jong, Council Clerk

A Note from Rebecca

Last September, I began an online program in worship leadership with a cohort of other lay CRC worship leaders and coordinators through Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. And this past week, after four courses and eight essays and many online discussions, a manila envelope arrived at church with my certificate in it. I received no credit for this course, just a slightly wrinkled piece of paper that says I have a Certificate in Worship Leadership. Oh, and so much more.

Because I don't plan to pursue work in a different church or even ask for a raise, the wrinkled certificate and lack of "credits" really doesn't matter all that much; that's not why I joined the program. The "so much more" is what matters. And the so much more is this: after four years on the job with no formal education in worship, the program taught me theoretical, theological, and historical foundations of worship that I sort of understood but had never dived into. It has given me language and practical skills to use when talking about and making decisions regarding worship. It has expanded my understanding of what a worship leader/coordinator can be. And it has strengthened my conviction that God uses our corporate times of worship to do powerful things among us, in us, and then through us as we take the gospel to the world.

Thanks again to the council and Pastor Kory for encouraging me to join the program and to the CRC's office of Worship Ministries for giving me this opportunity.

-Rebecca DeVries

Evening Worship Schedule

July 1: Covenant CRC: Dr. Jason Lief

July 8: First CRC: Rev. Bernie Haan

July 15: First CRC: Rev. Carl Klompfen

July 22: Covenant CRC: Dr. Jason Lief

July 29: First CRC: Dr. Jason Lief
(with communion)



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Paul and Ruth Clousing are thrilled to announce a new Clousing addition. Brooks Gabriel Clousing surprised the family (being a boy) on May 26. He was born at 12:27 AM and weighed 7 lbs. 11 oz. Our lives are so blessed with another healthy miracle. We're in love, and excited to help out where needed!



Carol and Dallas Apol also have a new great-grandchild! Carol's granddaughter Brittany (and Dan Foreman) adopted a girl who was born May 26. Malia Grace joins James, Carson, and Adeley.

July Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Barb H Linda V	9	Tom C Amalia F-K Chris & Rin G	25	Dane & Rachel H
2	Stuart B Annemieke L Stan VB Luke & Sarah H	10	Tiffany P	26	Pastor Gianni Gracia
3	Fednel T	12	Jill F Dane H	28	Jacob VP Eldon W
4	Merrill MC	14	Barb S	29	Dennis & Pam DJ Cal & Sally J
5	Mary D	16	Jason & Dani W	31	Isaac H
6	Gidge M	17	Ashlyn P Dwight VT Kris VP		
8	Isabel C Priscila C-F Sabine F Luke H Sharon V	19	Pete & Betty VP		
		24	Josiah F Mark & Merrill MC		



Offering Schedule

July 1

- AM** General/Building Fund
PM Resonate Global Mission (at Covenant)

July 8

- AM** Christian Education Fund,
Compassion Fund
PM Sioux City Gospel Mission
(at First CRC)

July 15

- AM** Missions Fund
PM The Banquet (at First CRC)

July 22

- AM** Tuition Assistance Fund
PM World Renew (at Covenant)

July 29

- AM** Covenant Outreach Ministries
PM First CRC Mission and Building Fund
(at First CRC)

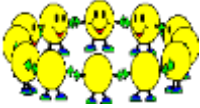
Thank You!

Dear Friends and Ministry Partners at Covenant, thank you for your contribution to our ministry last month! We're grateful for your generosity and your support and prayers for the work that we're doing in West Africa. As you think of us, please pray for Soss who will be leading two teacher-trainings during the month of July.

-Soss, Kara, and the boys

July Assignments

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



Nursery

Parents of the month: Tom & Ruth C

July 1

AM INF Emily K, Ryan H
TODDLER Dave K, Angela H
PM Rob & Megan H, Steve & Pat C

July 8

AM INF Robin F, Kathy DW
TODDLER Adam F, Jo F
PM (at First CRC)

July 15

AM INF Davey H, Sara P
TODDLER Kate H, Jeff P
PM (at First CRC)

July 22

AM INF Nick B, Lee R
TODDLER Jenni B, Emilyn S
PM Dave & Jeri S, Mark & Lisa C

July 29

AM INF Paul C, Laura L
TODDLER Ruth C, Ron & Carol O
PM (at First CRC)

August 5

AM INF Dennis DJ, Rebecca DV
TODDLER Pam DJ, Laremy DV
PM (at First CRC)



Coffee Servers

Rob H, Daryl H, Sherri TN,
Stan VB, Kris VP, Jan V



Greeters

AM Ethan B, Linda VH, Ryan Z
PM Robin F, Shirley M, Linda V



Ushers

AM Adam F, Tim K, Len R
PM Bob DS, Kathy DW

Substitutes

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

Rachel L, Verne M, Lois VZ,
Sharon V, Marcia W, Dani W

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, **July 23** for the August issue.

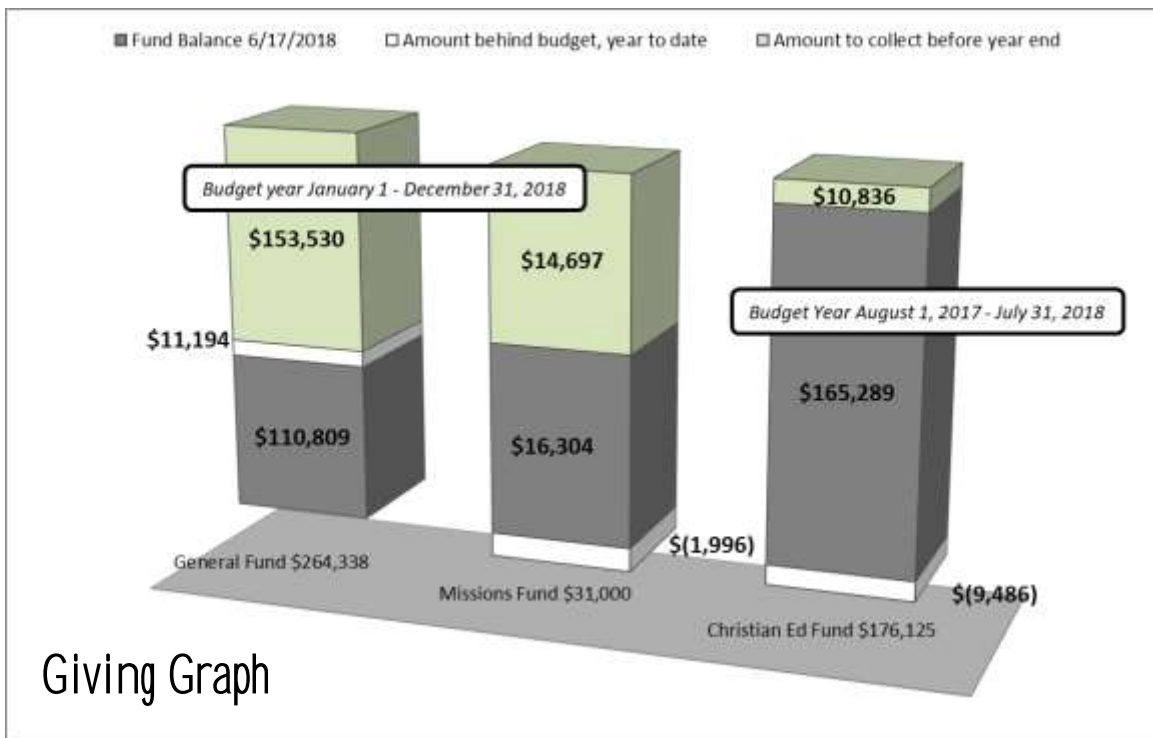
Notes from the Deacons

I think we can all agree we don't love spending money when it comes to things we don't want to spend money on, even when it comes to budgeted items. When it comes to our diaconal meetings we do a respectable job at open discussions on where the money should be spent. After the successful spring cleanup day we decided that now is a good time for Covenant to spend the budgeted money the Building Committee is asking for.

The upcoming projects the deacons have voted for will include new gutters on the south side of our church, fixing the leak above the pulpit, and doing crack sealant and resurfacing on the drive-thru and parking lot.

It's never fun spending money on these types of projects, especially when you view other needs in our church. But when you take the time to focus on a budget and the work and involvement of the Building Committee putting time and research into these tasks, it's good to focus on these repairs before they become a more expensive need.

-Lee Mellema



Volunteer of the Year

Wil Alberda was recognized on Saturday, June 16 as Volunteer of the Year for Siouxland Habitat for Humanity. He was nominated by the Sioux County Director of Habitat, Kurt Franje, who cited his years of service on the board as well as his dedication in providing countless hours of personal time and effort to further this Christian ministry whose mission is to provide simple, decent, affordable housing. This recognition took place at an open house of Habitat ReStore in Sioux City. Printed below is what Kurt Franje shared about Wil.

“I’ve had the privilege of witnessing Wil’s life for the past 6 years. If you get to spend time around Wil, watching and listening, you come to realize soon that His faith in Jesus Christ convicts him to lead the life of service that he does. As Siouxland Habitat, our ministry has been greatly blessed by His love for God and love for others. Often with volunteers, we think that there are tasks we wouldn’t ask or expect them to do, because they would be too lowly; something you wouldn’t ask someone to do that’s giving of their time and not getting anything for it. That’s not the case with Wil. He takes on the posture of servant, where no task is too small or too menial, because He knows who he is serving, Christ, His King.

The first hands on project I worked with Wil on was a rehab house in Sioux Center. Eventually we got to the stage of stripping/sanding woodwork and repainting it white. I was very new to the world of construction, and he was 70 some years old. He’d come morning and afternoon, doing what he could even though the heat was probably too much for his body. If I needed someone to check on a house to

make sure a sump pump was working or if a subcontractor had been to the site, I know I can always call Wil. If he’s available, he’ll do it. I’ve never sensed that Wil is selfish with his time. He gives it freely and willingly to anyone that needs a lending hand. He’ll check donation boxes; he’ll install sump pumps; he’ll pick up items from people’s houses for

(Continued on page 8)

Serving at Covenant

This is part of an ongoing series about ways Covenant members serve in our church, our community, and beyond.

4:40 AM when the roads are almost empty, and the sky is dark no matter the time of year is when we leave for Hospers.

We have been bringing Maria and formerly also Enrique to Hospers for dialysis for about 8 years now. She needs to be at the center at 5:00 AM and brought back to Sioux Center at about 10:00 AM.

We do this 3 times a week—Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. There are about six people in our congregation that either regularly make this trip or can be called on as a substitute if needed.

I have taken Monday mornings from the beginning of this program and have enjoyed the early morning drive, especially when there has been lightening in the sky. Maria speaks a little English and we always greet each other with a “good morning” when I pick her up and end with a “thank you” and “your welcome” when I am dropping her off.

-Kurt Vos

Search Committee Update

Our letter of inquiry and Banner advertisement have yielded several responses from pastors who indicated they would consider serving at Covenant. At our June 14 meeting the committee spent some time examining the characteristics of those pastors and completing an initial ranking. We sent five names on to council for affirmation/approval. Please be in prayer for the Search Committee and for the Council as we make decisions regarding the pastors who expressed interest.

-Dennis Vander Plaats

Cara's Travels

(Continued from page 1)

hoped to see changes, and reasons why they loved MH4H in their community.

All in all, this was an incredible experience, not only on a missional level, but also on an academic level. I was able to learn so much about how to do community-based qualitative research on the ground, struggle with how to ask questions that are culturally relevant with the language barrier that was obviously present in our conversations, and discern what the results we were getting meant for us as a group and for the future groups to come who will be carrying on this research.

If you are interested in hearing more about the research we did, I would be more than willing to tell you about it! My email is caramhorstman@gmail.com.

-Cara Horstman

Next month Cara will share a bit about the second trip she took this summer to Israel!

Volunteer of the Year

(Continued from page 7)

the ReStore; he'll go on fundraising visits. He'll let me borrow tools when I'm in a pinch. He'll hold this, cut that, fix that. If he's physically able to do the task, he'll do it.

He has also greatly served Habitat's mission by re-igniting our efforts in Sioux County. In the early 2000s, he was part of the Sioux Center Covenant Community that partnered with our affiliate and built two houses in Sioux Center. Those groups of volunteers eventually couldn't be sustained, and no Habitat project happened in Sioux County for a number of years. Eventually, he helped get things going again through a partnership with Justice For All and Habitat, and my position was created. I should probably thank you, Wil, for creating my current employment. Thank you for your passion for families in need of housing. Thank you for your life of service that has certainly put God's love into action in some many ways. We greatly thank you, and I am confident that one day you will get to hear God say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

-Kurt Franje

