

Pastoral Search Committee Update

During the month of July, the search committee conducted phone interviews with three pastors. We recommended two of those pastors to council to arrange visits to Covenant and Sioux Center. Council has scheduled Pastor Joel Kok, currently from Willowdale CRC in Toronto, to visit during the third week of August. Joel and his wife, Tricia, will be arriving on August 13 to interview with the council, worship/leadership staff, and with the Covenant congregation. The congregation is invited to meet Joel and Tricia the evening of August 14. Joel is planning to present a short devotional and has agreed to a congregational

interview after his devotional. If you have an interview question for Joel, please submit it to any member of the search committee or council. Opportunity will also be given for spontaneous questions from the congregation during the interview.

The second pastor recommended to council has not yet agreed to a face-to-face interview; and, at this time, we need to keep the name and other information confidential.

-Dennis Vander Plaats



We enjoyed beautiful weather, the sweetness of s'mores, and the delight of friendship and fellowship at the church bonfire on July 21!

From the Elders...

At our elders meeting of Monday 23 July, we began by asking ourselves how we come across—how we are seen—both by members of our body and by those from without. Jesus says to his disciples after he has washed their feet, “This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.” (John 13:35)

Let’s look at the body of believers at Covenant. Let’s look at each other. We have different life stories; some of us carry many burdens; others have an easier time of it. Some of us have strong political views on one side of the spectrum and others have polar opposite political views. Some of us share joys and concerns easily; others cannot share these things. Some of us love the ancient hymns while other love to hear a new song. Some of us come to church eagerly on Sunday mornings, ready to hear God’s Word. Others come frazzled and out-of-breath from trying to find our kid’s socks and shoes and having unsuccessfully tried to put out a temper tantrum or a fight on the way to church. Some of us are well groomed and impeccably dressed; others just got out of the shower and didn’t get the back of our clothing all the way buttoned or zipped up. Some of us have said things to a sister or brother that have offended and hurt that person. Some of us go out of our way to greet each brother or sister that comes across our path. Some of us avoid seeing, making eye contact or speaking with certain brothers and sisters.

But when we make it into church on Sunday morning, God sees each one of us—the inside and the outside of us—and he is glad to see us and he’s waiting to see if we are sharing his

gladness with each other.

Last Sunday evening, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 was brought to our attention. The apostle Paul had been disturbed by a report that there were quarrels among the members of the Corinthian church. Here at Covenant, as members of the congregation and as council, we hear of divisions within our congregation. We hear about hurts given and offence taken. We also hear about love and service offered and appreciated. Some of the things we as congregation and council have heard caused us to reflect as I mentioned at the beginning of this note. As elders we challenged ourselves even more to listen to and walk along side our sisters and brothers and we challenge each one of you to do the same. May God, in his grace and mercy, help us to let the love of Christ so rule us in our contact and relationships with each other, that we may be recognized as his disciples by the love we show one another. May God bless you and keep you, dear brothers and sisters, in the coming days, whatever they may bring!

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

Evening Worship Schedule

August 5: First CRC: Rev. Dan DeGroot

August 12: First CRC: Dr. Jason Lief

August 19: Covenant CRC: Jordan Helming

August 26: Covenant CRC:
Rev. Duane Tinklenberg

Cara's Travels

This summer, in addition to traveling to Haiti, I also had the opportunity to go on a 10 week trip to Israel with 45 fellow Trolls (Trinity Christian College students) with an organization called Passages. Passages' mission is to help the next generation of Christian leaders visit Israel in order to discover their roots and introduce them to political and cultural aspects of Israel and the Middle East. To achieve this mission, Passages provides a cheap trip packed full of historical landmarks, biblical sites, geopolitical stops, and daily lectures from an assortment of speakers.

While in Israel, we had the opportunity to experience it all. We walked the path of Jesus' passion, from the top of the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, into the city of Jerusalem, and ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where historians believed Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. We visited the desert—seeing Masada (an ancient fortress that King Herod built), Ein Gedi, and the Dead Sea. We experienced the Sea of Galilee and Jesus' ministry there, swimming in the Sea, visiting Capernaum and Nazareth, and sitting on the Mount of Beatitudes. We also got to hear about the geopolitical conflict between Israel and Palestine while sitting in the West Bank, the Civil War in Syria while looking into the country of Syria from a look-out point, and the history of Israel's independence from Independence Hall in Tel Aviv. Along with all of that, we experienced the Jewish culture by celebrating Shabbat (Sabbath) at the Western Wall with fellow Jews, ate an authentic Shabbat dinner with a Jewish family, and visited the Israeli Holocaust museum. As amazing as everything we experienced was, my favorite part was the short time we spent in Ein Gedi, an oasis in

the middle of the desert. I had some time to reflect on my time there and would love to share with you a blog post I wrote about it.

A Glimpse

It was one moment. A blink of the eye. A pause in my step. Less than a second. It was one moment that I experienced it all—creation, fall, redemption, and new creation—together, in a theological dance.

We were in the desert on this particular day in Israel. We had just finished our time at Masada, in the scorching heat of the desert, seeing the intricate fortress that King Herod had built thousands of years before. It was amazing, but I was ready for an air-conditioned bus, food, and a nap. Little did I know that lunch wouldn't be for another hour, the air-conditioned bus would be short-lived, and a nap was not on the itinerary.

We loaded the bus and took off from Masada towards Ein Gedi just a few miles down the road. As we drove, I was in awe of the mountains and deep caves within these mountains. We were reminded of the story of David hiding from Saul, probably in these caves, and the grace that David gave to Saul, even as Saul was trying to kill him.

As we unloaded the bus at Ein Gedi, I had low expectations for this “oasis in the middle of the desert.” I mean, it's the desert. It's probably going to be a dried up riverbed—nothing more than the creek that park I went to as a kid had.

But, boy, were my expectations completely and utterly wrong. As we walked up the path, I was met with crystal clear water. There were natural pools on multiple levels with waterfalls between them. This water flowed effortlessly from a place beyond what my

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August Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Marge DB	7	George F Jeff & Sara P	19	Steve C
2	Ruth Clo Pat E John & Sanneke K	8	Rin G Ron O	20	Barb M
3	Rob H Sos Maletoungou Laurey Z Dave & Luanne G	9	Ron & Carol O	21	Derek F John & Linda V
4	Max H Ryan & Angela H	11	Dani W Robbin & Sara E	23	Chris G John Z
5	Dave V Caden Z	13	Kathleen VT	26	Len & Lee R
6	Ezra L Lee M	15	Deb H Ryan & Amie S	27	Faith Bierma Matt D
		16	John & Laurey Z	29	Shonna P Dave S
		17	Jake & Trena VW		
		18	Del & Lois VZ		



Offering Schedule

August 5

- AM General/Building Fund
- PM GEMS (at First CRC)

August 12

- AM Christian Education Fund
- PM Luke Society—Water Filter Project
(at First CRC)

August 19

- AM Missions Fund
- PM World Renew: International Disaster Relief (at Covenant)

August 26

- AM Tuition Assistance Fund, Compassion Fund
- PM New Life Treatment Center (at Covenant)

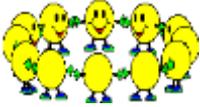
Thank You!

Thank you for your prayers for the west Sioux Falls Church plant. The Classical Church Plant Committee is being very prayerful and patient to find the proper planter and church leaders. To help make your prayer more specific we have been calling this church plant West Edge with the Biblical byline of Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Thank you to each one who is praying and working for the church plant.

-Jack Gray (for the Classis Iakota Church Plant Committee)

August Assignments

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



Nursery

Parents of the month: Mark & Merrill MC

August 5

AM INF Lee M, Rebecca DV
TODDLER Jenni M, Laremy DV
PM (at First CRC)

August 12

AM INF Nick B, Lee R
TODDLER Jenni B, Emilyn S
PM (at First CRC)

August 19

AM INF Dennis DJ, Isabel C
TODDLER Pam DJ, Alejandro C
PM Bob & Rebecca DS, Tom & Ruth C

August 26

AM INF Chris G, Rachel L
TODDLER Rin G, Andy L
PM Jake & Trena VW, John & Linda V

September 2

AM INF Ross F, Sarah H
TODDLER Lisa F, Luke H, Laura J



Coffee Servers

Jo A, Josue F, Ron O,
Lee R, Dave S, Trena VW



Greeters

AM Natalie B, Mary D, Chris G
PM Duane B, Terry F, Dennis VP



Ushers

AM Andy L, Ruth Clo, Jeff T
PM Sharon D, Mark H

Substitutes

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

Jan B, Luanne G, Luke H,
Eric R, Marty VP, John Z

Thanks for serving!

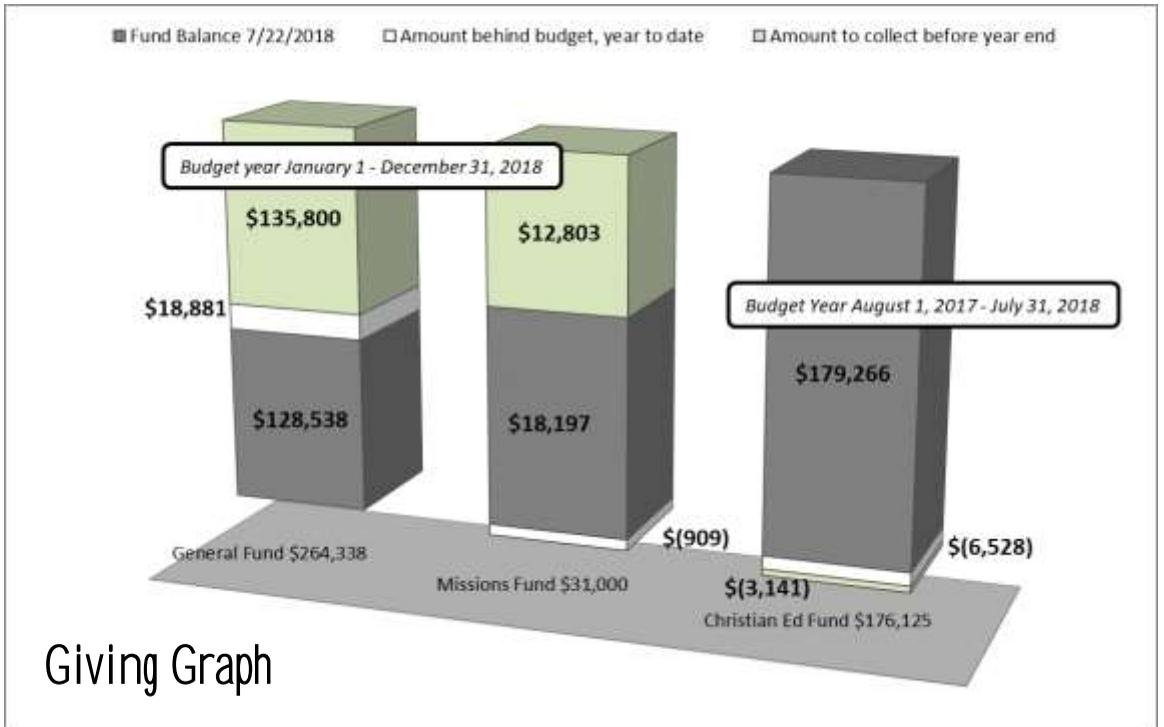
Are you interested in serving in any of these ministries, but aren't currently on the schedule? Contact Sara in the church office—we'd love to add you in! (covenant@mtcnet.net)

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, **August 20** for the September issue.



Outdoor worship service and picnic at Sandy Hollow.



CHURCH PICNIC

The Covenant Church Education year will begin on Sunday, September 9. We'll kick off the season with an all-church picnic. Watch for more details to come!



The Ten Napels offered an outing at their pond at the Christian Education Auction and, on July 11, a few Covenant families enjoyed swimming, fishing, and enjoying God's creation!



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Jill and Terry Friend have a new grandson! Isaiah Nathan Friend was born at 8:00 AM on June 19 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada to Nathan and Bethany. He weighed 7 lbs 12 oz and was 19 inches long.



Serving at Covenant

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

Bible League International, formerly known as World Home Bible League, is an international organization. Its mission is to serve the under-resourced church globally through the provision of Bibles, biblical resources, and training to transform lives worldwide through God's Word. There are three programs that they use: Project Philip Evangelistic Bible Studies, Church Planter Training, and Bible-based Literacy. They are in partnership with Bible Translators International from Fort Worth, Texas and have completed the Easy to Read Version in, I believe, 17 languages.

Each fall, (September 11, this year) BLI sponsors an all day regional retreat held at First Reformed church in Sioux Center. I am chairman of that committee. It is a day of worship, information, and inspiration. We raise between \$25,000 and \$35,000 each year. This year our worship leader is Jennifer Frens and our speaker is Liz Curtis Higgs, author of the best selling book, "Bad Girls of the Bible" along with many novels and Bible studies. The evening concert is the Matthews from Grand Rapids, MI. This dynamic duo is back by popular demand. You will hear many instruments, both sacred and classical. It is open to the public. You will also meet Jos Snoep, the new CEO, who recently moved with his young family from the Netherlands. For more information and to register, please refer to the brochure that was in your mail boxes and on the welcome table.

-Sherri Ten Napel

Cara's Travels

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eyes could see. And there was green, everywhere.

A group of us decided to hike higher to see a bigger waterfall. We took off, winding through the rocks, across streams, and under waterfalls until we reached the bigger waterfall. It was as I rounded the corner and saw the waterfall for the first time that the words of Psalm 42 really sunk in.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.*

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

*Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.*

*By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.*

I say to God, my rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?

Why do I go mourning

because of the oppression of the enemy?”

*As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,*

while they say to me all the day long,

“Where is your God?”

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?*

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.*

Psalm 42:1-2, 7-11 (ESV)

I marveled at the waterfall and greenness and life in front of me. I was in awe because, in that moment, I saw the vastness and intricacy of God's creation. I could see the characteristics of who God is in what he had created in the middle of the desert—a God who offers an oasis of life in the midst of drought and death, a God who satisfies thirst, a God who provides a safe place to rest.

However, as I turned around, I was met with the deadness of the desert and the Dead Sea behind me. I was in despair, in that moment, because I saw the brokenness of God's good creation. I realized that the of lack of life surrounding this oasis stretched on for miles, that in our sin we wander around the desert looking for our own way to satisfy our thirst, and that we take advantage of the oases that God so willingly offers us.

As I turned back to face the waterfall, I understood more fully what David was seeing as he wrote this psalm, and in that moment, I also saw the redemption of creation. This oasis still brings life to the desert that surrounds it and this life is not only physical but spiritual for those that visit. This oasis offers a visual representation of the deep thirst for water in the midst of the desert and our calling as Christians to thirst for Christ even more. This oasis is a symbol of the steadfast love of God, as he longs for us to be satisfied by Him and only Him, as he longs to give us the rest that we need.

And in that moment, with the deadness of the desert behind me and the fullness of life in front of me, I was able to picture what walking into new creation would be like. The old is gone. The sin that held us captive is no more. The deserts that we wandered around for so long are behind us. And what is in front of us is life, and life to the fullest. It is full of love and beauty. It is no longer just an oasis in the desert, because the desert is gone. Instead, it is the complete satisfaction of all that we thirst for, the satisfaction of our God who creates, redeems, and restores. In that moment, I experienced creation, fall, redemption, and new creation, all because of an oasis in the desert.

-Cara Horstman