

The Emmaus Way

Dear Covenant Friends,

On Sunday evenings in January, I hope to explore with you what the Emmaus Way means for our congregation. I trust dialogue regarding the Emmaus Way and worship will prove formative and fascinating for us.

As you may recall from my interview at Covenant in August and from other conversations, the Gospel story about Jesus' dialogue with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) has played a major role in my practice of worship. In accord with the Christian Reformed worship report from 1968, I view worship as a dialogue between God and God's people that we can view as taking place in five main sections: opening praise, repentance and renewal, Word of God, response to the Word, and dismissal with blessing. Within that dialogue I look to our Lord to perform three actions that he has carried out every Sunday since the first Easter: walking alongside and listening to us (Luke 24:15-17), opening the Scriptures to us (Luke 24:27 and 32), and making himself known to us in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:30 and 35).

In terms of weekly worship, Jesus making himself known to [experienced by] us in the breaking of the bread translates into weekly communion by means of the Lord's Supper. Leaders and members of Covenant have en-

gaged in dialogue about weekly communion for some time, and I look forward to continuing that dialogue. As I have stated: I hope Covenant adopts the practice of weekly communion, but I do not want the practice to feel rushed or forced. So devoting Sunday evenings in January to such a dialogue seems fitting and fascinating. For example, we can explore how "Joys and Concerns" and the Lord's Supper can go together.

For those able to participate in these formation gatherings, the process I propose will flow as follows: the Pastor will lay out some historical context in a way that speaks to our personal experiences and questions; then we will have a time for dialogue, and we can conclude the sessions with communal prayer. For example, when I think of historical context in relation to my personal experience, I consider that my ancestors were baptized into the one catholic church about a thousand years ago. They participated in the Reformation movement about five hundred years ago. And that thousand year connection to the church and its worship has suffered shattering disruptions for about the last fifty years. What happened to my extended family? What happened to the church, our society, and my own deepest convictions? I look forward to exploring such questions with you.

The Elders and others have not yet specified every detail of when and how often we will hold these formation gatherings in January.

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Courier

January 2019

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

From the Elders...

Pastor Joel and Tricia arrived just in time for Pastor Joel to start a series of Advent services in which we have considered, from Luke 21, the signs of the end of this present age, and from Luke 3, the coming of God's salvation, which will be seen by all mankind. In the course of both the Luke passages and the sermons, trees were featured; first as signs of the times to come, and then as models of what we should be like as we wait for the Lord to come back again. I wonder if we'll hear about trees again this coming Sunday. As council, we are so thankful for Pastor Joel's leading us through the Scriptures, and leading us as a congregation to consider how we can best be a witness to the Lordship of the Messiah who is coming. We pray that God will bless Pastor Joel and Tricia's ministry in our congregation.

We were also delighted last Sunday to have the Sunday School and Children in Worship students lead us in a Service of Lessons and Carols. Thanks, kids. We love you and you make us smile! You remind us that Jesus said, "...unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

In closing this note, dear brothers and sisters of Covenant, we know that many of us are walking in hard places ourselves, and our hearts go out to so many in our community and in the world who are suffering. We are praying for you. And we rejoice and give thanks with those who rejoice. May God bless each one of us according to our needs.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

The Emmaus Way

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With respect to Sunday evenings, Covenant has engaged in another dialogue for quite some time, and that dialogue also continues. I believe we can find fascinating formational ways to proceed together. I certainly look forward to our dialogue regarding what the Emmaus Way means for Covenant.

Your Friend in Christ,
-Pastor Joel Kok

Formation Sunday Evenings

Formation Sunday Evenings begin in January, focusing first on "The Emmaus Way." You've heard Pastor Joel use this phrase—this is your opportunity to explore further what it is. A three-week series devoted to the topic begins on **January 13** at 6:00 PM. Nursery will be provided! Look for more information in the bulletins in the coming weeks. In February, the focus of Formation Sunday Evenings will be on "spiritual gift formation."

If you are interested in participating in a group assisting Pastor Joel in developing "Formation Sunday Evenings," please contact Pastor Joel.

-Mark Tazelaar

Sunday Evening Schedule

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| January 6: | No evening service |
| January 13: | 6:00 PM The Emmaus Way |
| January 20: | 5:00 PM Cadet Sunday (at Faith CRC) |
| | 6:00 PM The Emmaus Way |
| January 27: | 6:00 PM The Emmaus Way |

A Look at the CRC's Positions on Some Troubling Issues

Since its formation in 1857, the Christian Reformed denomination has formulated positions on:

- issues of personal behavior (May we dance or attend movies? May we divorce our spouse? May we drink alcohol? May we gamble? May we get an abortion? May we engage in war?),
- issues of church polity (Are women allowed to be preachers, elders, and deacons? How are homosexuals to be received in the church? How should we relate to other faith communities? How should we treat racial minorities? How do we deal with what appear to be conflicts between scripture and science?),
- issues that relate to the our stewardship of creation (What did God mean when he told Adam to tend and care for the garden?).

Now you might ask, especially if you are a young church member, “Why does the CRC take positions on these kinds of issues? Doesn’t this just create conflict among members of the church?”

One very practical response is that the world—especially the contemporary world—is a very complex place and most of us need some help as we seek to live our lives faithfully before the face of God. Unfortunately, scripture itself does not always speak with absolute clarity about how we should live our daily lives and our ecclesiastical lives.

Furthermore, the CRC is Calvinist in its orientation and Calvinist Christianity is not just a doctrine of individual salvation. It is a “world and life view” where God is more than just a

rescuer of lost sinners. Jamie Smith explains it this way in *Letters to a Young Calvinist*: “God places us in creation as his ambassadors and emissaries, but also as co-laborers, entrusting to us the task of unfolding all the potential that’s packed into creation.” This kind of work is going to bring about differences of opinion, but the church can be a force to mitigate those differences.

The church puts together study committees made up of serious Christians—biblical scholars and lay people, some of them experts in a particular field—and has them examine a particularly troubling issue over a period of several years and eventually make a recommendation about how we should respond to that issue. A synod or several synods will then study these recommendations and come to some conclusion.

Of course these decisions are not infallible. In fact, many of the church’s decisions have been revised or changed over the years. But they represent the best understanding of scripture and knowledge of the workings of the world we are able to arrive at in our time. And always, Christian men and women will be formulating these positions after much prayer and study, seeking to be faithful to God’s will as revealed in scripture and creation.

Twice in the past four years, our Covenant 11th and 12th graders have studied these issues as they were taught by Pastor Kory and Dave Schelhaas. Beginning in January, the adults who attend Covenant Sunday Morning will be looking at the CRC’s positions on things like “Creation and Science,” “War,” “Divorce,” “Church and State,” and more.

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January Birthdays & Anniversaries

| | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1 | Jenni M | 12 | Terry F | 25 | Jasper F |
| 2 | Dallas A | 14 | Pastor Joel K Michael VP | 26 | Jonathan B |
| 3 | Jo A Paola Gracia Josue & Ana F | 16 | Peregrine Groenewold Rog VH | 28 | Trena VW |
| 5 | Andy & Rachel L | 17 | Jaren B | 30 | Amie S Jeff T |
| 6 | Mark & Sara H | 20 | Jenni B Tricia K Dave K | 31 | Sos & Kara Maletoungou |
| 9 | Lois VZ | | | | |
| 10 | Bryanna C | 23 | Stetsen F | | |



Offering Schedule

January 6

AM General/Building Fund
World Renew: General Fund

January 13

AM Christian Education Fund,
Compassion Fund
Justice For All

January 20

AM Missions Fund
Cadets

PM Cadets (at Faith CRC)

January 27

AM Tuition Assistance Fund
Bethany Christian Services

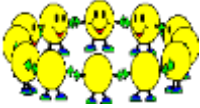
Mid-Sioux Gift Baskets



The pastoral groups were very generous so the deacons were able to buy many useful and fun items of good quality for the Mid-Sioux gift baskets. A big thank you to the congregation from the SAM (Service And Missions) Committee!

January 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

January 6

AM INF Josue F, Cheri H
TODDLER Ana F, Mark H

January 13

AM INF Erik H, Sharon V
TODDLER Barb H, Kurt V
PM Rob & Megan H, Steve & Pat C

January 20

AM INF Ethan B, Angela H
TODDLER Donna B, Ryan H
PM Mark & Lisa C, Jo F

January 27

AM INF Doug DB, Robin F
TODDLER Marge DB, Adam F
PM Jeff & Sara P, Kathy DW

February 3

AM INF Jason W, Emily K
TODDLER Dani W, Dave K



Coffee Servers

Alejandro C, Bob DS, Sarah H,
Cheri H, Jeri S, Linda V



Greeters

AM Dave G, Rachel L, Sherri TN



Ushers

AM Jan B, Barb H, Marcia W

Substitutes

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

Steve C, Zoe H, Len R,
Don TN, Kara T, Beth VB



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, **January 21** for the February issue.

Notes from the Deacons

Dear Covenant Family,
 Here we are at the end of 2018—already!
 When we look back, it’s been a busy year.
 Here is a short review of some of the things
 that we, as your deacons, have been busy
 with over the past year.

Each of the deacons is assigned to a committee, so each month we have a report on and make decisions about any projects, concerns, or needs that require assistance. We also have a monthly report from the church treasurer and the chair of the deacons.

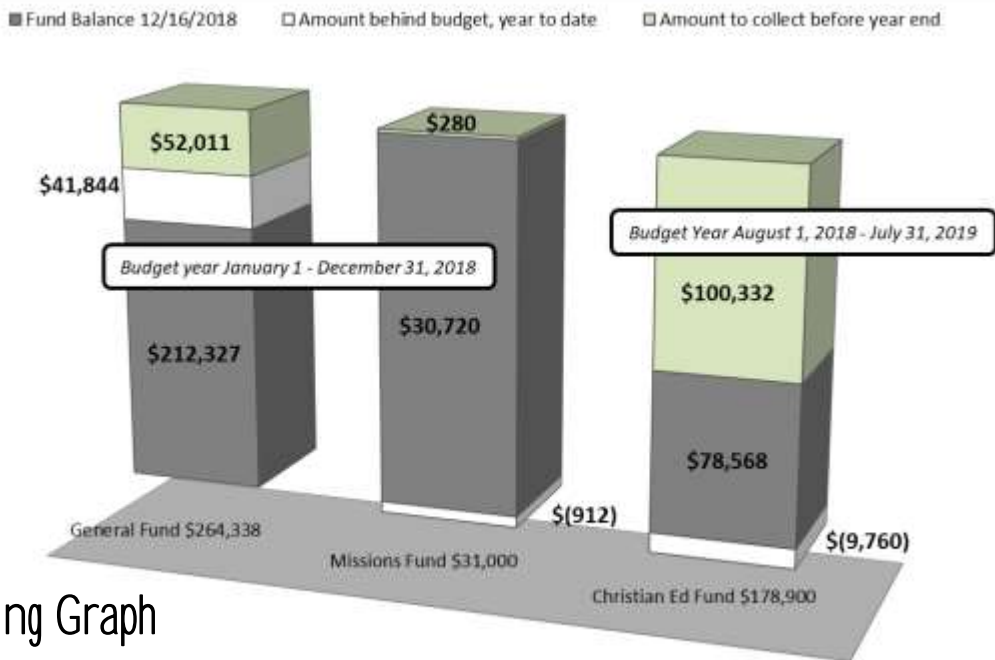
One of our goals is to know what our responsibilities are as your deacons, so each month we have been reading through and discussing a few chapters in the *Deacons Handbook*. This has been a wonderful resource and has given

some good reminders, insights, and challenges on how we can best serve our Lord and our Covenant family through our work as deacons.

One topic that we have been dealing with is what to do about the second/special offering causes that we have collected at our evening services. We have discussed a few options, but at this point, no decision has been made. It is on the agenda for the January council meeting, so, hopefully, a decision will be made soon.

In August we were excited when Covenant made the decision to extend a call to Pastor Joel, and we were thrilled when he and Tricia accepted that call. The practical side of that was finding a way to get all their belongings from Toronto to Sioux Center, working with the Building Committee to get the parsonage ready, and getting important things like insurance in place.

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Giving Graph

Note from the Deacons

(Continued from page 6)

As we look ahead, we are already starting to think about nominations to replace the three hardworking deacons who will finish their term in May. Those three deacons are currently serving as our church treasurer, as a deacon representative on the Building Committee, the Christian Education Committee, the Worship Committee, and the Tuition Assistance Committee. We will need either a newly elected deacon or a deacon who is currently serving to step into those roles. We would like to encourage you to either be thinking about someone to nominate for deacon or to be open to serving if you are asked.

We also have some specific building needs that will require some attention in the near future. Parts of the roof need to be repaired before the problems get worse, and some of the stained glass windows will need some professional repair work done some time soon. As you look ahead to the coming year, please consider how you can help us meet these financial needs by giving regularly to the General Fund—our church family budget plan.

Thank you for being such an encouraging and generous congregation. It is a joy to serve as your deacons. We care about and pray for each one of you. Please pray for us as we strive to serve with compassion and care.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and many blessings in the coming year.

For the Deacons,
-Pat Crull

A Look at the CRC's Positions...

(Continued from page 3)

The Education Committee encourages you to join with others in these discussions.

Covenant Sunday Morning Schedule

January 6: The CRC's position on Faith and Science (Dave Schelhaas)

January 13: Panel Discussion on Faith and Science, continued: (Robbin Eppinga, Davey Henreckson, Pastor Joel)

January 20: The CRC and the Sanctity of Life (Pastor Joel)

January 27: The CRC and Divorce (Tom Clark)

February 3: The CRC and Human Sexuality (Pastor Joel)

February 10: The CRC and the Relationship between Church and State (Jeff Taylor)

February 17: No Class

February 24: The CRC and Women in Office (Pam De Jong)

March 3: The CRC and Race Relations (Jenni Breems)

March 10: The CRC and Worldly Amusements (Dave Schelhaas)

March 17: The CRC and War (Dave Schelhaas)

March 24: The CRC and Climate Change (Dave Schelhaas)

March 31: The CRC and Ecumenism (Pastor Joel)

-Dave Schelhaas

The January Series

We will be livestreaming The January Series each weekday from January 3-23 from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. You can find more information at <https://calvin.edu/january-series>.

Thursday, January 3

Todd Cioffi and Christiana deGroot: *The Transformative and Redemptive Power of (a Christian) Education*

Friday, January 4

Arthur C. Brooks: *Bringing America Together*

Monday, January 7

Jimmy Lin: *Finally, Some Good News about Cancer*

Tuesday, January 8

Kara Powell: *Growing Young: Helping Young People Discover and Love the Church*

Wednesday, January 9

Mariela Shaker: *Finding Refuge on the Stage*

Thursday, January 10

Moderated Conversation with Jenna Bush Hager: *Telling Stories that Inspire*

Friday, January 11

Craig Detweiler: *Searching for the Image of God in a Digital Age*

Monday, January 14

Nicholas Kristof: *Lessons from 30 Years of Covering the World*

Tuesday, January 15

Leland Melvin: *Chasing Space: An Astronaut's Story of Grit, Grace, and Second Chances*

Wednesday, January 16

William Powers: *Sustainability, Happiness, and the "Slow" Movement*

Thursday, January 17

Erik W. Carter: *Incomplete without You: The Church and People with Disabilities*

Friday, January 18

Ruth Carter: *The Art of Storytelling Through Costume Design*

Monday, January 21

Willie Jennings in celebration of MLK day: *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*

Tuesday, January 22

Rachael Denhollander: *A Time to Speak: Addressing Justice and Forgiveness*

Wednesday, January 23

Mary Robinson: *Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future*



Chris and Rin bought the joy of joining the young people for an evening of Nerf Gun Wars. What fun! Chris couldn't make it so Sarah Hawley joined me (Rin). It was a great time and I only cheated a few times. Some how the YPS managed to win against the adults. There's always next year!

