

# Formation Sunday Evenings Update

On the last two Sunday evenings (January 13 and 20), we have had good dialogue and moving testimonies about following the Emmaus Way at Covenant. At 6:00 PM on January 27, we will conclude our discussion of the Emmaus Way by looking at John 6 together, and in February we will enter new territory regarding our Sunday evening journey.

First of all, beginning on February 3, we will meet at 5:00 PM. We hope this earlier time will enable wider participation in our Sunday evening gatherings. Secondly, beginning on February 10, we will begin to listen to stories and testimonies from Covenant members and friends. On February 10, Jim Schaap will share from his fiction in a way that illumines God's work in his life, and on February 17, Covenant fifth-graders will share Bible passages and other persons or events that have been helping them to know God. On February 24, the Knightsounds from Unity Christian High will join us, so we will listen to them as well as sing and study Scripture with them.

Our time of discernment regarding Sunday evenings continues; we invite you to share prayerfully in that discernment. If you'd like to participate in the planning, please email Pastor Joel at [joelekok@gmail.com](mailto:joelekok@gmail.com) and inquire about joining the Formation Fellowship, the group that will engage in shaping this vital ministry. And please consider participating in

the next several Sunday evening gatherings. Here is the schedule:

**January 27, 6:00 PM**

Bible study and dialogue based on John 6

**February 3, 5:00 PM**

Bible study and dialogue based on Psalms 1 and 2

**February 10, 5:00 PM**

Stories with Jim Schaap

**February 17, 5:00 PM**

Stories with Covenant Fifth Graders

**February 24, 5:00 PM**

Music and Scripture with the Unity Christian High Knightsounds

-Pastor Joel Kok

---

*"Testimony seems to have no beginning or end, no alpha or omega. After we tell God's story, it tells us, and then we have a new story to tell. The stories shape the community, and the community responds with new stories. But both the telling and the hearing have the power to transform."*

(Lillian Daniels, *Tell It Like It Is: Reclaiming the Practice of Testimony*, The Alban Institute, 2006, p. 21)

## From the Elders...

Hello brothers and sisters in the Lord. I have been thinking about Pastor Joel and Tricia's coming to be with us as a new adventure in walking the road of what it means to be a congregation of Jesus Christ—a group of travelers, who along with many other groups of travelers—other churches and denominations—are walking, ultimately towards the renewed creation, and doing so in step with Jesus, finding out how we can witness to his love for our beautiful world and all its people.

I'm reminded too, of the pilgrimage that Jesus and his parents made to Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of the Passover. Remember that Pastor Joel preached about that passage from Luke 2—and how on the way back home, Jesus' parents discovered that he was not with them?

And the thought of pilgrimage brings to mind Psalm 16, because in this Psalm, David talks about how the Lord leads him along the path of everlasting life. Psalm 16 closes with these words: "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures for evermore."

As we continue to journey through our lives day by day along with brothers and sisters here at Covenant, I'm eager to see what we will discover on our way and how we will grow closer to Jesus. I pray that all of us will grow together in the joy and challenge of this new adventure.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

## Classis Church Planting

The Classical Home Mission Committee asks for your prayers as we seek to plant two new churches. Pray for God's blessing on the preparations being made this year to open West Edge CRC in Sioux Falls in 2020. This month five members made an exploratory trip to Chamberlain/Oacoma in which they saw many opportunities to serve that community with an active ministry leading to a church plant in the near future. Thank you for your prayers as we watch what God will do through us to bring people to Jesus.

-Rev. Jack Gray

### Welcome, Thea!



Jason and Dani Wyenberg, along with Charlie and Lily, are thrilled to announce a new member of the covenant family. Thea Jane Wyenberg was born at 2:34 AM on December 28, weighing 8 lb 5 oz, and was 20 inches long. Mom and baby are doing great.

# Universal Design in Worship

At the 2016 Calvin Worship Symposium, attended by Pastor Kory, Sara Ploegstra, Laremy De Vries and me, Rebecca De Vries, we were introduced to the topic of Universal Design in worship by Barbara J. Newman from the Christian Learning Center. Newman asked us as worship planners and leaders to think like architects—expect people of varied abilities and disabilities to be a part of your worshipping body and plan and design accordingly.

Pastor Kory and I came back and asked the worship committee to reflect on how we were doing. We began a conversation about Universal Design and hospitality in worship from the moment you drive up to Covenant on a Sunday to the coffee hour after the service. We took a look at our website, our welcome table, our Communion practices, our prayers of confession. And the conversation continues each time we meet as a worship committee and each time our planners plan.

Some things that have come out of these discussions:

- We realized that we've already been working on this at Covenant: there are scheduled greeters at every door, we have a hearing loop system, we provide a printed order of worship as well as projection that leads and informs, there are GLUE volunteers who provide support to individuals or families who have unique needs or gifts and provide an avenue for greater participation in the Covenant church community.
- We've started offering gluten-free bread at the Lord's Supper.
- We painted the welcome table wall and

other walls in church to make the space feel warmer.

- We're exploring the idea of providing consistent children's bulletins and possibly children's worship bags.

But what we are discovering is that we don't know all of the varied needs represented in our church body. If there is something that would make you more easily able to enter into and participate in worship, will you let us know? Is there something that hinders you from being able to fully participate in worship? Have you experienced something at another church that you would like Covenant to consider implementing? Let us know. We welcome you to drop a note in the offering plate with a comment or suggestion (or email Rebecca or another member of the worship committee). Please be sure to include your name on the note.

The Covenant staff, the worship committee, and the worship planners and leaders will continue to consider how we can design our worship and space so that as many people as possible can fully participate in worship. But may all of us, in all our various committees and simply as members of this body, consider how we can make Covenant a place where all feel they belong.

And as we think about these things, we remember these words from the Covenant worship statement:

“Finally, our worship is a public expression of love; our love of God and our love of each

*(Continued on page 8)*

# February Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



## Offering Schedule

### February 3

AM General Fund

### February 10

AM Christian Education Fund

### February 17

AM Missions Fund

### February 24

AM World Renew

## Covenant Sunday Morning Schedule

**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)



WWW@Cov

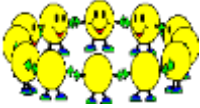


We're looking forward to our annual Warm Winter Wednesdays scheduled for February 6 and 20 at 5:15 PM! Dinner will be provided, though we will have a free-will offering to cover expenses. On February 6, we'll have tacos and a game night—feel free to bring your family's favorite game. We'll enjoy pizza and a pinewood derby on February 20. (Feel free to stay for the Cadet Pinewood Derby at 7:15 that evening!) Join the fun!

-Laura Janssen

# 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 3

AM Jason & Dani W, Dave & Emily K

PM Ron & Carol O, Lee & Jenni M

### February 10

AM Davey & Kate H, Nick & Jenni B

PM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Dennis & Pam DJ

### February 17

AM Tom & Ruth C, Emilyn S, Lee R

PM Andy & Rachel L, Chris & Rin G

### February 24

AM Alejandro & Isabel C, Ross & Lisa F

PM Jake & Trena VW, John & Linda V

### March 3

AM Laura J, Laura L, Dave & Luanne G

PM Bob & Rebecca DS, Eldon & Marcia W

## Sunday Evening Schedule

February 3: Study and Dialogue on Psalms 1&2

February 10 Faith Stories—Jim Schaap

February 17: Faith Stories—5th Graders

February 24: Worship with Knightsounds

\*all gatherings are at 5:00 PM



## Coffee Servers

Jill F, Chris G, Luanne G,  
Luke H, Andy L, Dennis VP



## Greeters

AM Daryl H, Mimi K, Kris VP



## Ushers

AM Duane B, Jo F, Ron O

## Substitutes

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

Doug DeBoer, Sharon D, Lee R,  
Eric R, Stan VB, Laury Z

## 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 18** for the March issue.

# Notes from the Deacons

Dear Covenant Family,

As noted in the January report from the Deacons, we have spent time discussing the offering schedule. After discussing some different options, we brought the following recommendation to the Council, which they approved. The offering schedule will be as follows:

- 1st Sunday—General Fund
- 2nd Sunday—Christian Education Fund
- 3rd Sunday—Missions Fund
- 4th Sunday—Alternate Compassion/Tuition Assistance Fund and World Renew
- 5th Sunday—Building Fund

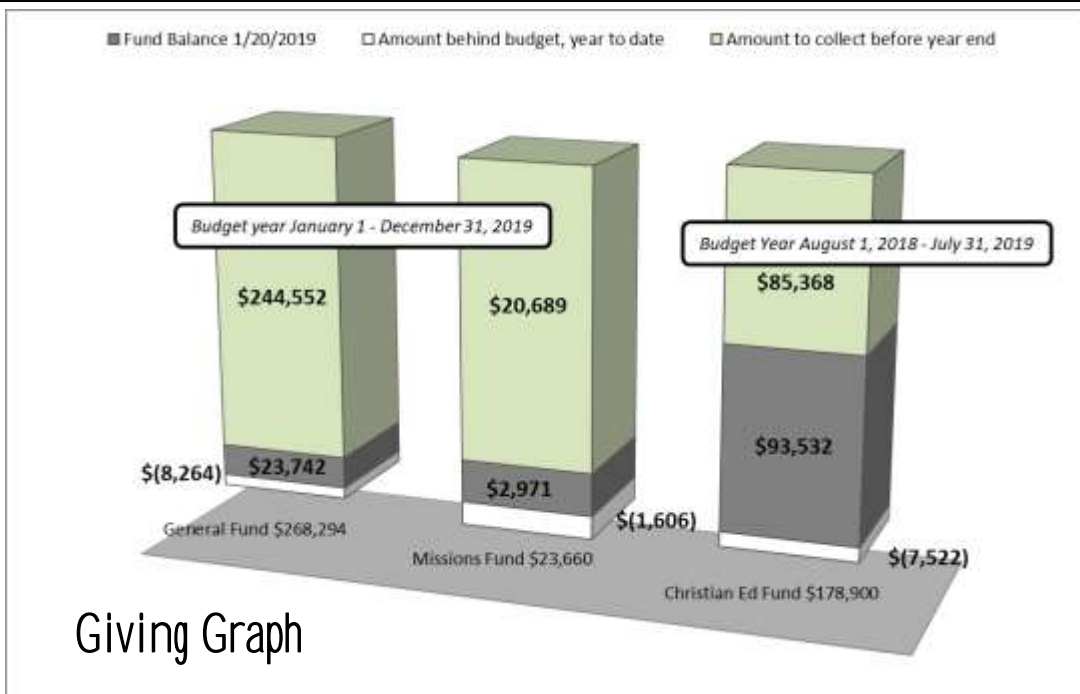
The General Fund is the largest item in the budget and includes Ministry Shares. The Christian Education Fund includes offerings

for the Christian schools represented within our congregation. The Missions Fund provides support for what we have pledged to our missionaries and to Amistad.

The Compassion Fund is used to provide financial assistance to both church members and members of the community who are experiencing difficulties meeting needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, or other financial needs. After some discussion, we have decided to include the Tuition Assistance Fund within the Compassion Fund, since it qualifies as a financial need. It will be listed as a Compassion Fund offering, but remember that this includes Tuition Assistance as well.

World Renew works for justice and mercy as they join communities around the world to renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation. Also note that the Building Fund will have a separate offering with the goal to build

*(Continued on page 7)*



# Serving at Covenant

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



For the past 5+ years I have been a part of the Education Team for One Body, One Hope. I was asked to join the newly formed team because of my role as a preschool teacher. The idea at the time was to try to

help the Liberian teachers in the schools that were supported by OBOH to develop ways to teach phonics and reading. Looking back, I see

## Note from the Deacons

*(Continued from page 6)*

up this fund in order to do some needed repairs.

In place of the second offering for special causes, we will be having another envelope offering in the spring, similar to the Thanksgiving offering. The Deacons will continue to monitor and adjust the opportunities to give as our needs present themselves. Communication is important, so we will keep you informed. If you have any questions, contact a deacon.

As we continue to serve you, we are thankful for your generous giving. We encourage you to continue giving of your gifts as the Spirit leads you.

For the Deacons,  
-Pat Crull

that our vision was very limited and God had much bigger ideas!

Our plans to “teach the teachers” were stalled by the Ebola epidemic that swept through Liberia. Even though there was no travel, we continued to work and discuss ways to make the schools successful. God used this time to help us see what was really needed and ways to provide it.

In July of 2017, OBOH partnered with Sheila Dykstra (Education Consultant to West Africa from Christian Reformed World Missions) to lead an education conference at Abide in the Vine Disciples Church. The teachers of the Vine School System were able to attend this conference and began to develop plans for transformational teaching strategies. Sheila, along with several members of the Education Team, were able to hold another conference this past summer. What a blessing to come alongside these teachers, encourage them and empower them to be effective educators.

OBOH currently sponsors 17 dedicated teachers at the Christ our Hope campus. In addition to providing a living wage for each teacher, we seek to meet curriculum and technology needs for the teachers and students. Sponsorship supporters receive a monthly “teacher feature” via email to learn about and to pray for our teachers regularly. This past year I sent out the “teacher features” each month. As the education system in Liberia changes, the need for sponsors has grown tremendously. If you are interested in sponsoring a teacher please talk to me or sign up at [www.onebodyonehope.org](http://www.onebodyonehope.org).

-Cheri Horstman

# Praying for our Missionaries

Here are some prayer requests from Tricia Van Dyk and Benjamin Groenewold who serve in Lithuania with Resonate Global Mission:

## Answers to prayer:

- We finished the semester tired but reasonably healthy. We are especially thankful that Peregrine is gaining energy after a lengthy bout of illness in November.
- Tricia, Benjamin, and Miriam all sang in the LCC choir for the Christmas program on December 12. Miriam also made cookies and Christmas cards to sell with her class at school during the Christmas fair that precedes the program. Proceeds from the fair go to the local homeless shelter.
- We were again blessed to continue our Advent tradition of hosting several evenings of singing Christmas carols with colleagues (and eating homemade stroop-

wafels!).

## Prayer Requests:

- Please pray for us and our students as we get ready to head into the spring semester. Classes start on January 12, with much of the previous week scheduled for meetings. Benjamin will be taking a break from teaching Worldview & Christian Faith this spring, and will instead be teaching an elective course on Kierkegaard and Existentialism. Tricia will be teaching two sections of Moral Philosophy as usual, along with Introduction to Philosophy.
- We continue to be in need of God's guidance as we strive to figure out how to faithfully balance our professorial duties, homeschooling, research, parenting, Lithuanian learning, communication with supporters, and so on.

---

## Universal Design in Worship

*(Continued from page 3)*

other. Therefore, to paraphrase the words of St. Paul, if our liturgy speaks with the best poetry of men and if our choir sings like the angels, but does not have love, we are only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If our preaching has the gift of prophecy and our teaching has the theological depth to fathom all mysteries and all knowledge and if our professions of faith can move mountains but do not have love, they are nothing. If we give all we possess to the offering plate and give over our bodies to work projects, but do not have love, we gain nothing. If we worship in love, our worship cannot fail.”

What can you do?

- Listen to this presentation given at the Calvin January series by Erik W. Carter entitled “Incomplete without You: The Church and People with Disabilities.” <https://livestream.com/calvin-college/tjsaudio/videos/185954111>
- Check out this helpful list of “Role-Based Tips for Inclusive Congregations” from Barbara Newman and the Christian Learning Center. <https://clcnetwork.org/for-churches/roles/>
- Read this article by Newman in *The Banner*. <https://www.thebanner.org/features/2018/02/everyone-welcome>

-Rebecca DeVries