

# Greetings & Thank You

Dear friends at Covenant—thank you so much for the beautiful send-off table runner made by the Covenant Quilters (Jo Alberda's creation), signed by the congregation and lovingly sent to us by Rin Goedhart. It is a beautiful addition to our new place and will always be a sweet reminder of the wonderful 17 years we spent at Covenant, in fellowship with you and worshipping together.

We are beginning to feel “settled” in Grand Rapids and enjoying the new environment there—our yard has frequent visitors of all types: deer, wild turkeys, woodchucks, and more, and Versluis Orchards (where Dave grew up) just adjacent to our property, has kept us supplied with summer's bounty. It's

also been nice living closer to Dave's family, lending a hand with his folks, and having our son David over for dinner now and then.

Still, while the transition has gone well, we do miss the rhythm of our lives in Sioux Center, at Dordt, and with the good people at Covenant. We continue to pray for you as a church, that God will bless you and your ministry to the community. You were certainly a blessing to us and we miss you.

In case you ever find yourself in Grand Rapids and need a place to stay, or would just like to have coffee, here's our new address: 165 Alewa Drive NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (712-441-0894) You are always welcome!

-Jan and Dave Versluis



September 14 ♦ 9 AM—12 PM  
The swap meet is back!  
Start cleaning your house...



The Sunday School year begins on **September 9** and we're celebrating with an all-church picnic at Children's Park following our morning worship service. Here are the food assignments by last name:

- A—K—bring a large salad
- L—Z—bring a large dessert

The council will be grilling burgers and hot dogs, and chips and drinks will be provided. Please bring your own table service if you're able. We may plan to take pictures for a new photo directory that day as well. Stay tuned for more info!

Courier

September 2019

**COVENANT**  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

# Notes from the Elders

“The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place; the church is a people!” This song that the Sunday School children sing—and I think we’ve sung it upstairs too—goes on to say that the church is different kinds of people with many kinds of faces. I think we all agree that, as the refrain of our song claims: “All who follow Jesus, all around the world, yes, we’re the church together.”

We were admonished in the August 18 worship service about Jesus’ word to us from the Revelation of Saint John not to lose our first love as Church. Pastor Joel explained that that “first love” is what is described in Acts 2:42: (the believers) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

I think we would agree to that as well. Yet we also have, within one congregation, many different ideas of how we should accomplish this devotion to teaching and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.

At our elders meetings, deacons meetings, executive meetings, and council meetings, we are busy with the nuts and bolts of what it means to be a congregation of believers of a local church of a particular denomination that is part of the Capital C Church, which is the body of Christ here on earth. And while our song rightly claims that the church is neither a building nor a steeple, it is also true that many individual congregations of believers in our society today do meet in buildings with steeples and roofs that need to be replaced. We also meet at certain times of the day and for a certain lengths of time. And in pursuing

our “first love,” we also engage a pastor, worship leaders, musicians, Sunday School and Catechism teachers, custodians, committees to oversee and develop our buildings, our worship services, our missions commitments, our educational programs; and we elect elders and deacons. We have meetings—lots of them. We discuss matters of what it means to be church and how to go about devoting ourselves to teaching and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. Do we need to have two worship services or one? Shall we gather on Sunday evenings for faith formation and what shall these gatherings look like? Is it good for us to receive the Lord’s Supper every Sunday or is it better to receive this sacrament once a month or four times a year?

As the “church year” and the “school year” commence and as we reflect on the nuts and bolts of being a local congregation, I am reminded of our unity—“yes, we’re the church together!—and our diversity—“many kinds of faces, all colors and all ages too, from all times and places.” The elders ask for your prayers, brothers and sisters, as the church year begins, as pastoral group dinners begin, and as elders and deacons begin their cycles of home visits. We ask for your prayers as elders, deacons, and committees meet and wrestle through issues to make wise decisions, just as we pray that we may serve you as we ought. We pray that, in spite of differences of opinions and preferences, all of us may continue to grow in love, and perhaps even to change in response to the Spirit’s leading and that, for the sake of the world that needs to hear the good news, we treasure our unity in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

# Get to Know the Classical Safe Church Team

Hello, Lakota Churches! My name is Tara Boer and I have been appointed as the coordinator for the Classical Safe Church team representing Classis Lakota and Classis Heartland. This past spring and summer our team was created and established with five total members consisting of 1 pastoral and 1 congregational member representing each classis. I wanted to introduce myself and your Lakota representatives and discuss some of the ways we can support you as you think about ways your church can move forward with your safe church policies and practices.

The pastoral representative for you is Pastor John Gorter from New Holland CRC in New Holland, SD. His phone number is 605-243-2250 and email is [jgorter25@gmail.com](mailto:jgorter25@gmail.com). Your member representative is Heidi Van Roekel from Bethel CRC in Sioux Center. Her phone number is 712-441-4742 and her email is [mhvanroekel@hotmail.com](mailto:mhvanroekel@hotmail.com). I am also serving you in a consultative and supportive role as the coordinator of this team. My personal cell phone is 712-898-6468 and my email is [tara.boer@dordt.edu](mailto:tara.boer@dordt.edu). My previous professional experiences have allowed me to serve abused children and families in many different capacities and I look forward to using these experiences to ensure our churches are safe places for all that attend.

Broadly speaking, the tasks of the classical safe church team consist of the following:

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in classis who are developing (or reviewing/revising) congregational safe church policies.
- The Safe Church Team serves as a re-

source for churches dealing with allegations of abuse.

- The Safe Church Team serves as a clearing house of best practices and periodic trainings for Classis Heartland and Classis Lakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

Our team met in July and discussed our goals for the churches we represent. At the classis meeting on September 17 we will present our report and recommendations for your churches and discuss other ways we can support you in ensuring safety for the children and families in your congregations.

One thing we wanted to bring to your attention is that Abuse Awareness Sunday is scheduled for September 22! The selected focus topic this year is Circle of Grace, an excellent program that teaches children and youth respect for themselves and for one another by honoring the sacredness of all relationships. In addition, the program offers tools to help children and youth determine if a situation is safe, and what to do when something feels unsafe. We can't be with our children all the time; Circle of Grace helps keep them safe wherever they are, not just at church. In addition, the comprehensive program helps build church communities where the value of each person is honored and all are free to worship and grow, free from abuse.

This is more than a "special offering" Sunday. It's an opportunity to bring an issue out into the light that too often remains hidden. A problem can never be solved by ignoring it, or

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# September Birthdays & Anniversaries

4	Rylan Brue Angela Hannigan Isaac Maletoungou Val Zonnefeld Tim & Mimi Kamp	13	Laura Lappenga	25	Rachel Hibma Becky Stevenson
5	Marcia Westra	15	Adam Kramer	27	Michael Ribbens
7	Nate & Shawna Van Niejenhuis	16	Kelly Crull	28	Paul Clousing Aidan Vos
8	Shirley Taylor	19	Charlie Wyenberg	29	Levi Landman
9	Doug DeBoer Micah Goslinga	20	Pam Adams Erik Hoekstra		
		22	Matthew Lesage Rockne McCarthy John Stevenson		



## Offering Schedule

### September 1

AM General/Building Fund

### September 8

AM Christian Education Fund

### September 15

AM Missions Fund

### September 22

AM Compassion/Tuition Assistance Fund

### September 29

AM Building Fund

## Formation Sunday Evenings

Our 5:00 PM Evening Formation Gatherings this month will include the following:

**August 25:** Jason Lief, Office of Social Justice: Discussion about Immigration

**September 1:** Pastoral Teaching: "Lead us not into temptation"

**September 8:** Carlye and Ariel Gomes share about their work abroad

**September 15:** Intergenerational Gathering

**September 22:** Poetry and sharing: Rachel Hibma and Dave Schelhaas

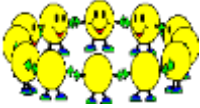
**September 29:** Amy Keahi from ATLAS



*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

# September Assignments

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



## Nursery

**Parents of the month:**  
Luke & Sarah Hawley

### September 1

AM Laura L, Kurt & Sharon V  
PM Paul & Ruth C, Jo F

### September 8

AM Erik & Barb H, Jason & Dani W  
PM Eldon & Marcia W, Lee & Jenni M

### September 15

AM Ryan & Angela H, Dave & Jeri S  
PM (no nursery)

### September 22

AM Dave & Emily K, Jake & Trena VW  
PM Tom & Ruth C, Kathy DW

### September 29

AM Nick & Jenni B, Lee R  
PM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Chris & Rin G

### October 6

AM Dennis & Pam DJ, Andy & Rachel L  
PM John & Linda V, Tricia K



## Coffee Servers

Jo A, Duane B, Ruth Cla,  
Mary D, Mark MC, John Z



## Greeters

AM Rob H, Trena VW, Marcia W



## Ushers

AM Cal J, Andy L, Jeff T

## Substitutes

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

Jenni B, Mark C, Sherri TN,  
Jake VW, John V, Kurt V

## 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, **September 23** for the October issue.

# Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/19-8/18/19) \$170,264	\$158,222	-\$12,042
Missions	(1/1/19-8/18/19) \$15,015	\$22,710	+\$7,695
Christian Education	(8/1/19-8/18/19) \$10,321	\$9,341	-\$980

## Notes from the Deacons

If you are like me, you are always looking for ways to save a little money or stretch your dollar. That is especially true this time of year as school is starting again. The deacons want to remind you and inform you of ways to lessen your tuition bill.

First, we would like to remind you about TRIP. TRIP (Tuition Reduction Incentive Plan) is a plan where you purchase gift cards or gift certificates from local and national retailers. Certificates are purchased at full face value, and are redeemed at full value at the retailer, but the retailer offers a discount which is applied to your tuition account. These payments can be applied to accounts at SCCS, Unity, and Western. Also, for those who do not yet have children at school, you can set up a future account and start contributing to that now.

Secondly, another terrific option available is NICSTO (Northwest Iowa Christian Schools Tuition Organization). NICSTO is an income/needs based tuition grant available for families whose income does not exceed four times the poverty guidelines. For example, a family of four with an income less than \$103,000

would be eligible for funds. To receive NICSTO funds, an application form must be filled out and reviewed. If funds are granted, they will be dispersed after the 1st of the year.

Sometimes, however, a payment might still be difficult to make. In that case, the Tuition Assistance Fund is available. If you find you need assistance, contact your Pastoral Group deacon.

The congregation can also help in making tuition more manageable. Members can purchase TRIP and have the savings applied to a specific family's account or to our church's Christian Education or Legacy account. Another way to benefit our families is by contributing to NICSTO. Those that contribute to NICSTO receive a 65% state tax credit and can deduct the gift on their Federal income tax. This fills up quickly so if you plan to donate make your intentions known to SCCS soon.

Finally, we as deacons encourage all members of Covenant to contribute to our Christian Education Fund. The Christian Education Fund collectively lowers the cost of tuition for all families by "shoulder(ing) the operational costs of the school". It is a covenantal way to support past, present, and future families of SCCS, OCCS, Unity, and Western. For more

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## Notes from the Deacons

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information on TRIP, NICSTO, or the Legacy Plan please access the SCCS website or ask your Pastoral Group Deacon

-For the Deacons, Kris Vander Plaats

## Serving at Covenant

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

This year I started volunteering at SOWer's, a group that sews and packages feminine hygiene kits for places in Africa that do not have access to hygiene products. I started volunteering when my grandma invited me to go with her one time, and I had a blast (even though I was the only person under 50). Because of this experience I learned not to take for granted what I have.

-Cambri Zonnefeld



*We had a wonderful time of worship and fellowship at the WE Service on August 18. Pictured: Rowan Haan and Emma Henreckson are covered with God's feathers, finding refuge under his wings (Psalm 91:4). Thanks to the Formation Fellowship group and the kitchen committee for their hard work in planning this event.*

## Thank You!

### From World Renew Disaster Response:

Dear Friends at Covenant, thank you for your summer offering to World Renew Disaster Response Services. You might be interested to know that this summer, more than 450 volunteers from 28 churches are working on homes in 20 different communities that have been hit by disasters. Your consistent offerings help make this possible. Our monthly Opportunity Link email is a great way to be alerted to volunteer opportunities. Find this, and sign up for the email, at [worldrenew.net/aboutdrs](http://worldrenew.net/aboutdrs). Thank you again, and may God grant you wisdom and encouragement in your ministries.

### From The Luke Society:

The warmth of summer is fully upon us, but beyond the physical warmth, we feel a spiritual warmth as we work alongside you in the Luke Society. In a cold world filled with sin your church is helping to bring the warmth of Christ's love to more than 30 countries through physical health and spiritual care. We thank the Lord for Covenant Christian Reformed Church and pray that he may bless your gifts for His Kingdom.



## Get to Know the Classical Safe Church Team

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pretending it doesn't exist. Abuse thrives in silence and secrecy; we must not allow it to thrive in our churches.

So, we encourage you to take this opportunity to shine the light of our Lord into this dark place. If your church would like to focus on an abuse topic other than Circle of Grace, there are several other abuse awareness resources topics to choose from. You can find other bulletin inserts, worship resources, and information at [crcna.org/safechurch/abuse-awareness](http://crcna.org/safechurch/abuse-awareness).

We as a team look forward to supporting you and helping you develop your safe church policies and ensuring your places of worship are safe places for all that attend.

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact me or a member of your appointed classis safe church team.

We look forward to serving you in this role!

-Tara Boer

*Just a reminder: Rebecca DeSmith is the Safe Church Coordinator for Covenant!*

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# Bible League International Retreat

On September 9 from 6:30-8:30 PM and September 10 from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM, Bible League International Volunteers invite you to the "His Plan...Our Purpose" events in Sioux Center. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

Monday evening's dinner event will be a blessing of fellowship and an opportunity to hear from Bible League International—where success is measured in transformed lives.

On Tuesday, you will hear from keynote speaker Kendra Broekhuis. Kendra is the author of *Here Goes Nothing: An Introvert's Reckless Attempt to Love Her Neighbor*. Raised in the Midwest, falling in love and marrying her Dordt College sweetheart, moving to Guatemala, living in the south side of Chicago with her husband as he taught at Chicago Christian High, ministry in the inner city of Milwaukee, the blessing of children and loss

of her little girl... Kendra's story has been doused with joy, hilarity, grief, depression, and all sorts of things in between. She is learning to trust God by taking one day at a time, and by praying, "Thy will be done." You will also hear from Nervana who is passionate about building God's church in the Middle East. You'll come away inspired as she shares how God is moving in the hearts of people in her country.

Rich worship will be led throughout the day by Lora Rankin, the Music and Worship Director at New Hope Evangelical Free Church in Orange City. Her hope is to encourage others to sing to the Lord so that His "ways may be known on earth, and His salvation among all nations" (Psalm 67).

Purchase your tickets today online at [bibleleague.org/tickets](http://bibleleague.org/tickets) through September 3. You can also find more information online at [bibleleague.org/retreat19](http://bibleleague.org/retreat19). Talk to Sherri Ten Napel for more information!