

Going...

Going...
Gone!



The Christian Education Auction is set for **November 15** at 6:00 PM. It's less than a month away! Have you been thinking about what you could offer to auction off? Maybe you could teach swimming lessons? Offer your handyman skills! Love to bake? Cakes and pies are a hit at the auction! In years past, experiences such as themed dinners, murder mystery events, game nights, and things of the like have been hot items. I know of a couple of people who really appreciated the babysitting services that were offered too! Nothing is too big or too small to be auctioned off as it all goes towards our contribution to the Legacy Plan. We do plan for childcare to be provided that evening, so feel free to take your kids.

We are offering a couple of ways for you to let us know your auction items—there is a sign up sheet in the back of church and be on the lookout for a link to sign up electronically. Or just contact one of the Christian Education Committee members (Jenni Mellema, Adam Fedders, Steve Crull, or Megan Haan). Let's make it an awesome night of supporting our kids and the great schools they attend!

-Jenni Mellema

A Note from Pastor Joel

The church season of Advent begins on December 1 this year, and on that Sunday, Covenant will follow a central biblical teaching regarding worship. Some biblical passages can help you discern that teaching.

When Jesus called Levi to follow him as a disciple, Levi responded by giving “a great banquet for Jesus.” (Luke 5:29) When Jesus taught his beloved listeners regarding the kingdom of God and brought healing to those needing to be cured, he revealed himself as the Good Shepherd by taking bread, looking up to heaven and providing a feast in which “all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.” (Luke 9:17) When Jesus taught God's holiness in the form of mercy, he taught his followers to host hospitable meals; (Luke 14:12) and when Jesus' rivals criticized him for the scandalous width of his mercy, central to their accusation was that charge that “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:2)

By emphasizing meal ministries as he did, Jesus fulfilled major biblical teachings that he (and we) inherit from Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and the Scriptures as a whole. (See Genesis 14, Exodus 24, Isaiah 25, and many other passages.) As Jesus lived out his Father's will by obeying even to the point of death on a cross,

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Courier

November 2019

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Notes from the Elders

In a book of daily devotional readings, I came across this description, “The Church is a group of people united in gratitude to God for the redemption of the whole creation from the decay of sin and death...” (Edmond Lee Browning, *A Year of Days with the Book of Common Prayer*, October 17) This definition of what the church is led me to think of how the third part of the Heidelberg Catechism explains what it means to live a grateful life. M. Craig Barnes, in *Body and Soul: Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*, explains that, “... this life-altering gratitude is so much more than an attitude or theological commitment. It must be grounded in specific acts of praise” (p. 113).

In a Small Group discussion after watching a presentation about community involvement by a group of churches in a particular city, our small group wondered what the community involvement of our church here in Sioux County could possibly look like. A couple of members of the Small Group, who also happen to be elders, brought this question to the September elders meeting. As a result, the following minute appears in the minutes of that meeting, “We briefly discussed ways we could be a concrete presence in and minister to our community, sharing ourselves and our gifts in a way that would meet a need, share the love we have in Christ, and build up our community. We will bring our ideas to the next meeting.”

As I was contemplating what to share in this month’s note from the elders, I thought I might share this information with all of you and invite you to think of concrete ways that we, as a congregation, can show our gratitude

in concrete ways in our own town and county. Our father in heaven has been so gracious to us. How can we communicate his love so that others will be warmed by it and come to join the time-and-globe-spanning “group of people united in gratitude to God for the redemption of the whole creation from the decay of sin and death...”? Get in touch with your elder if you have some ideas that we can bring to our next meeting! As always, know that we covet your prayers as we seek to serve you, our dear brothers and sisters at Covenant.

-Sanneke Kok (on behalf of the Elders)

SAVE THE DATE

Who: All are welcome!
What: Pool & Pizza Party
When: Saturday, December 14
4:00-5:00—swimming
5:00-6:00—pizza
Where: The All Seasons Center
Why: Fun with our church family!



The Christians’ small group gathered and carved pumpkins in October. Pictured here is the handiwork of Eli Horstman, Nerwen Cao, and Jocelyn Zonnefeld.

Eggrolls, Anyone?

The Siouxland Unity CRC is a small congregation in Sioux City that has ministered to the Lao Tai Dam people in this area for many years. It has grown from an outreach to primarily Laotians to include many other ethnic groups.

A primary fundraiser for this church is selling the fantastic authentic egg rolls they make. The SAM committee is making them available, hoping that Covenant can come alongside Pastor Keo and his people by supporting them in this way, and praying for them. The church is located at 601 Court Street and they worship in English the 1st Sunday of the month. If you decide to visit, you are invited to stay and enjoy a potluck lunch with them.

Watch for an order form in your mailbox soon. The egg rolls will be here in time for Christmas. We are partnering with Faith CRC—same delicious egg rolls, but you can pick them up from our church kitchen instead of Faith's.

-Carol Oostra



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Meet Benjamin Lee Wetselaar! He was born on October 15 and was 5.6 lbs and 18" long. All are doing well. His parents are Dorinda and Sam Wetselaar, and his brother is Jeffery. Deb and Daryl Hibma are the proud grandparents and Dane and Rachel Hibma are his uncle and aunt.



The deacons are putting together a Skills/Gifts Survey. Look for it to come out this fall. We will be using the results to see where we can plug people into volunteer opportunities within our church.

A Note from Pastor Joel

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he said to his apostles, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15) And on the first Easter Sunday, Jesus reversed the curse of Eden by breaking bread with disciples in a way that opened their eyes so that "they recognized him." (Luke 24:30-31; contrast the eye opening in Genesis 3:7) When Jesus rose, he shared meals with his followers (Acts 1:4), and his disciples grew in their faith by breaking bread together. (Acts 2:42) Like the Emmaus-goers, disciples throughout the entire history of the church have experienced how Jesus was "made known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:35) That explains why the earliest Christians would meet "on the first day of the week [Sunday]" in order "to break bread." (Acts 20:7)

When people listen primarily to the Scriptures, the catholic (universal) teachings of the Church, and our Reformed Confessions, they no longer ask: Why should we celebrate communion weekly? Instead, they ask: How can we not celebrate communion weekly? From Advent through Christmas, Covenant will follow biblical teachings and celebrate communion every Sunday. Our worship will include both the pulpit and the table as a way for us to embody the grace upon grace by which Jesus empowers us all to live as children of God.

-Pastor Joel

November Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Jan Bajema	16	Mia Mercado Castelan Lauren Vander Plaats	27	Bella Drissell Tim Kamp Ryan Zonnefeld Jerry & Shonna P
2	Jeananne Kuiper	20	Verne Meyer Duane & Jan Bajema Paul & Ruth Clousing	28	Neil Collins McCarthy Doug & Marge DB
3	Natalie Brummel Mary Ploegstra	21	Cambri Zonnefeld Alejandro & Isabel Castelan	29	Laremy DeVries Hannah Landman
4	Austen Goslinga	23	Bob DeSmith Sadie Landman	30	Esteban Gracia Jocelyn Zonnefeld Ed & Mary Dengler
5	Rue Mellema	24	Louisa DeVries		
8	Rebecca DeSmith	26	Georgina Gracia Kate Henreckson David Taylor		
14	Sharon Bouma Mark Christians Nancy Vanden Bosch				
15	Teo Crull				



Offering Schedule

November 3

AM General Fund

November 10

AM Christian Education Fund

November 17

AM Building Fund

November 24

AM World Renew: World Hunger

November 28

AM Thanksgiving Envelope Offering

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

October 27

5:00 PM: Reformational Catholicism

6:00 PM: Community Reformation Day
Service at Bethel CRC

November 3: Pastoral Teaching: "For yours is the kingdom, power, and glory"

November 10: Amy Keahi, ATLAS

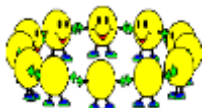
November 17: Intergenerational service led by our high schoolers

November 24: Sharing from Memoirs by Pam Adams, Susan Brue, and Dennis Vander Plaats

November Assignments

Here are the assignments for members to “practice hospitality” this month...

Remember to wear your name badges!



Nursery

Parents of the month:
Ross & Lisa F

November 3

AM Dave & Luanne G, Ross & Lisa F
PM Duane & Jan B, Mark & Cheri H

November 10

AM Luke & Sarah H, Kris & Marty VP
PM Ethan & Donna B, Rob & Megan H

November 17

AM Ryan & Val Z, Joe & Erin E
PM Adam & Robin F, Jo F

November 24

AM Josue & Ana F, Ron & Carol O
PM Paul & Ruth C, Lee & Jenni M

November 28—Thanksgiving Day

AM Jeff & Sara P, Jason & Dani W

December 1

AM Kurt & Sharon V, Laura L
PM Eldon & Marcia W, Dave & Jeri S

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, **November 18** for the December issue.



Coffee Servers

Paul C, Marge DB, Bob DS,
Cheri H, Len R, Linda V



Greeters

AM Dennis DJ, Kathy DW, Lee R



Ushers

AM Lisa C, Rin G, Mark T

Substitutes

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

Steve C, Sharon D, Eric R,
Don TN, Stan VB, Laurey Z

Pastoral Group

Dinner Schedule



October 27—Ploegstra/Haan
November 3—DeSmith/Wielard
November 10—Kok/Goslinga
November 17—Schaap/Vander Plaats
November 24—Bailey/Oostra

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/19-10/20/19) \$216,699	\$192,233	-\$24,466
Missions	(1/1/19-10/20/19) \$19,110	\$27,995	+\$8,885
Christian Education	(8/1/19-10/20/19) \$43,177	\$42,640	-\$537

Notes from the Deacons

“But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you all excel in this grace of giving... Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

—II Corinthians 8:7, 9:7

As you may know, budget season is upon us again. As deacons we spent part of our October 14th meeting discussing the upcoming budget and what our needs, wants, desires, and missions are. We all have things that we would like to see get funded and ways we think these things can or should get funded, but ultimately the only way our budget gets funded is by financial gifts from each one of us.

We are all blessed in many ways and can give in many different ways. Some can give financially, some with their talents of music, some with gifts of labor; and these are all great gifts. I would like to take time to talk to you particularly about financial gifts.

In December, 2018, we committed to a 2019 budget of \$299,954. This budget is roughly a \$40,000 cut from what we budgeted in 2017.

So how are we doing on our commitment to making this lean and mean budget work? To be frank, we are doing so-so.

Our General Fund giving was running \$19,881.73 behind in August and is \$23,651.46 behind in September. To meet our General Fund Budget amount, we will need \$90,724.99 to complete the year. “Wowzer!” you might say. How in the world are we going to do that? Well I have good news—I have faith in our congregation because we can do great things when we work together.

Our Missions Fund and Building Fund are doing well. We do a great job of supporting our missionaries and we are finding ways to keep our building in good working condition for minimal costs.

Lastly, we have the Christian Education Fund or the Legacy Plan. We do not pay for any of our Legacy Plan commitments from our General Fund—this is 100% funded by the gracious giving of each you. Currently we have a commitment to our Christian schools (SCCS, OCCS, Western, and Unity) of \$15,000 a month. When you couple that monthly commitment to our General Fund commitment, we need \$45,000 a month for the next 3 months or \$225/member/month.

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The WE service on October 20 included prayer centers around the Lord's Prayer.



Putting Love Into Action

Dordt's PLIA Mission Organization is again hoping to send about 150 students out to 14 locations across the US during Spring Break to work with churches or other local ministries. They would like to partner with us through prayer, service, and financial support.

Do you have any yard work, household tasks, or 'odd jobs' that students could help you with for a donation to PLIA? Contact Emily Kooiman (mlykmn@dordt.edu). Note that PLIA will also be included on the Thanksgiving Offering envelope as a cause to which you could contribute. Watch for further announcements as this year's plans develop.

-Carol Oostra

Notes from the Deacons

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Together we can do this. We can support each other and work together to accomplish great things. Let's finish the year strong!

-For the Deacons, Adam Fedders





*Wil Alberda
shared this
story from
Farmer to
Farmer, an*

*organization that Covenant folk have been
involved with for years.*

This is the story of Santiago Cruz, a member of the land bank “The Blessing” at AMC, in his own words.

“My name is Santiago Alejandro Cruz, I’m 43 years old, married to Fátima del Rosario Luna of 37 years old, together we have 5 children. I came to land bank “The Blessing” on April 28th, 2011. My wife was a member of a group of women benefited by AMC in a fund project revolving with pigs, I went to work on other farms to earn support for my family. I felt uncomfortable because I lived with all my family in the house of my mother-in-law and sometimes in the house of a sister-in-law. The desire to have my own house was big and much more to have a farm.

One day my wife was informed that AMC was promoting access to land for families without resources and my family was one of them, so I investigated the application process through my wife who was already close to AMC.

Receiving the notification that we would be given the opportunity to be partners was a great joy for my family.

The first days were hard, we did not know anyone, and we had almost nothing to eat. The house did not protect us well from the conditions, much less in winter. However, my wife and I promised not to miss this opportunity and fight, because we believe in a God who gives us strength.

I proceeded immediately to work the plot, we

planted cassava (yucca), and basic grains, these were the items that sustained us at the beginning. Today our plot of 2.68 m² has bananas, annatto (achiote), cocoa and fruit trees; this has helped us to have secure nourishment.

Three years ago, my wife was diagnosed with a serious illness, which affected us in all aspects, to such an extent that we requested help in different places to buy medicine. We got frustrated because we thought that we would not be able to make our payments for the land in the stipulated time. My wife’s family knows the desire we have to inherit a house and a working farm to our children, and they helped us to cancel our loan.

Today I am happy and relieved to have no debt, everything that will be produced will be earnings, in addition to seeing how my wife has considerably improved her health. I can only thank God and AMC for helping us to make our dream come true, to have a house of our own and a farm as a means of work.”

This story was originally written in March 2019. Since this has been written, Santiago’s wife has still been struggling with her health conditions and at times has seemed to only narrowly escape death. Her situation is still difficult so please continue to pray for healing for her.

Join the Choir!

The Covenant Occasional Choir will be singing during Advent. We will begin rehearsals in November and plan to sing during the morning services on December 8 and December 15. We invite all singers high school and up to join us. Thanks to Ryan Smit for leading us again this year!