

WWW@Cov

Warm Winter Wednesdays are coming up!

We continue our Covenant tradition of gathering a few Wednesdays during the month of February to bring some cheer to the long Iowa winter. The weather is cold—so we'll warm up with some good food, fellowship, and fun with our church family!

Here are the plans for the month:

February 12 ♦ 5:30 PM Pizza & Pinewood Derby

Join us for pizza and our annual Covenant Pinewood Derby! Bring an old car that you have tucked away or use one from Ron's collection to race and claim the championship title! Pizza will be served beginning at 5:30 PM with

the races to follow. You are invited to stay to watch the Cadet Pinewood Derby beginning at 7:15 PM.

February 26 ♦ 5:30 PM Potluck & Ash Wednesday Worship

While this isn't a Fat Tuesday celebration by any means (it is Ash Wednesday, after all), we will gather and feast together at 5:30 PM. Taverns/BBQ's/Sloppy Joes/Maid-rites (or whatever you'd like to call them) will be provided and we hope you will bring the salads and desserts. (Watch for announcements in the bulletin about who brings what!) Following our meal together, we'll gather in the sanctuary at 6:30 for an Ash Wednesday Worship Service. We plan to be done by around 7:00 so the kids can attend their church night activities.

We hope you will join us!



On January 7, 40 members of Small Groups of Covenant met at the Sack Pack organization to put together food packs for Sioux Center children. These food packs feed around 270 children in our town. After working about a half hour, we finished the packs and gathered to pray for these children and their families. I must say it was one of my more rewarding moments working with fellow church members. It was a good feeling knowing we were helping those in need. Later we gathered at Culvers for ice cream. A great night filled with helping hands, laughter, and food.

-Deb Hibma

Courier

February 2020

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

A Note from the Elders

Hello, dear Covenant sisters and brothers. At the time of this writing, I have just returned from a full council meeting (that's the elders and deacons together). I've written before about things we as elders are busy with and I thought you would find it interesting to hear about a few things the full council discussed this evening. Our discussion left me realizing what a joy it is to be serving as an elder at Covenant and being a part of the forward movement and development of our congregation.

First of all, training has begun and is continuing under the leadership of our dedicated and hard-working Safe Church Coordinator, Rebecca De Smith. The deacons were happy to report that many members of the congregation have volunteered to be a part of this effort to keep our church both welcoming and safe! You will be kept informed as things fall into place.

Furthermore, Pastor Joel wanted to know if there was any interest among the council members for holding a Covenant retreat this year. He has a couple of ideas for scriptural focal points for such a retreat. Other members of council chimed in with fond memories and additional ideas for a full-church retreat. Hopefully you will be hearing more about this in the weeks to come.

Council is excited about our young people's commitment to a Serve Project in London, Ontario, this coming summer. Three adult leaders will go along with our sons and daughters. Young people—we are so happy that you have decided to spend a chunk of your summer helping those who minister to brothers and sisters in need in the city of London, and

we support you with our prayers and other means as well. We're proud of you!

Finally, as I listened to reports from council liaison members of the various committees, I was again reminded of how active so many of you are in making all kinds of different things happen in our congregation. It's true that we are, as the apostle Paul describes the church, a body that consists of many parts, each one depending on the other to do the thing they do best. Thanks be to God for the body of Covenant CRC!

-Sanneke Kok

A Note from Pastor Joel

At all times and especially in polarized times, I look to Abraham Lincoln as a political mentor, and I look especially toward his second inaugural address. In that speech, Lincoln clearly states his willingness to fight for what he thinks as right, and he also refuses to demonize his opponents. He states, "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

Can Lincoln's words guide us in our politically divided time? I believe they can. We can advocate and vote for who and what we think is right, and at the same time we can resist church division and seek the common good together. We can agree with not only President Lincoln but also the prophet Isaiah that "the Almighty has his own purposes." The

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Lament

I went through a terrible event that has affected the rest of my life. My husband and I were injured in an automobile accident and for nine years I cared for Charlie. When he died, I received many books on grieving, but they did me little good. The book that I just finished reading was the only one that addressed my situation and made sense to me. The book is *Lament for a Son* by Nicholas Wolterstorff. I have read several books by him but this one was just what I needed and at the correct time.

My husband, Charlie, was someone who should be lamented. Not only was he a child of God but he was very aware of this for his entire life. Charlie was born into a family that had religious difficulties—a Catholic father and a mother who was not anything and especially not a Catholic. Charlie and his brothers were sent to the closest Protestant church in the neighborhood. It turned out to be a Biblical church—Grace Orthodox Presbyterian. The pastor, Ray Commeret, was aware of the situation and took care of the boys’ Christian development. Charlie’s beliefs were established at a young age. On our first date he told me about his commitment to serve the Lord. Charlie’s family did unite around our Risen Savior through the work of this Orthodox Presbyterian minister. So why would I not lament and think of Charlie. The books that I received from various sources expected this lament to be short lived.

I received something different from Wolterstorff. Nicholas Wolterstorff lost his son at age twenty-five which is different from me. I lost Charlie’s mind and all of who he was at sixty-one. Wolterstorff writes about the

uniqueness of each loss. Saying you know how someone feels about death is disingenuous because you don’t. It also means to Wolterstorff that he leaves out the pots and photos that Eric made. I too leave out Charlie’s books and the lovely library that he built. In each room there are several things that Charlie created. The Lord gave him a fine mind, not only in thinking but in doing. Wolterstorff says, “He’s not replaceable.” “Only a hole remains, a void, a gap, never to be filled.”

I have had a person react to my grief and say that others have had it harder than me. Of course, I know this. Wolterstorff says, “Don’t say it’s not really so bad.” That is what others have said to me, but I know the pain and the

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Note from Pastor Joel

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prophet’s testimony to that truth goes as follows:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
(Isaiah 55:8-9)

Such acknowledgement of a difference between God’s purposes and our own does not mean we slide into thoughtless passivity. Instead, as the Lord tells us through another prophet, we follow the Lord’s teachings “to do justice, to love kindness [*hesed*, or steadfast love], and to walk humbly with [our] God.” (Micah 6:8)

Blessings,
-Pastor Joel

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Deirdre Eggebeen	14	Ana Feliciano Marilyn Mouw	23	Karl Hoekstra
3	William Lappinga	15	Sanneke Kok	24	Joey Horstman
7	Wil Alberda	17	Jim Schaap	26	Ross Feikema
9	Jane Taylor	18	Joe Eggebeen Ryan Smit	28	William Henreckson Lila Janssen
12	Robbin Eppinga Les Sybesma	19	Dennis DeJong Casey Sybesma		
13	Dale Brands Mimi Kamp				



Offering Schedule

February 2

AM General/Building Fund

February 9

AM Christian Education Fund

February 16

AM Missions Fund

February 23

AM Compassion/Tuition Assistance Fund

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

February 2: Cambri Zonnefeld

February 9: Rev. Deb Rensink: Whispers of Love, Hope, and Joy

February 16: Miriam McAuley

February 23: Teaching Service

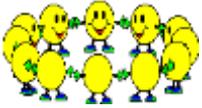
Dear Friends and Partners at Covenant,

Thank you for your recent gift towards our ministry! This past year has been one full of joy and new ministry opportunities. We recently opened the doors of the Teacher's Garden, a Christian education resource center where teachers can come to "grow" in their professions through access to computers and a library for research, teaching materials, discussion groups, Bible study, trainings, and the like. Please pray with us in the New Year as we continue to walk alongside local teachers and school administrators as they seek to help their students learn and grow in their knowledge of God's Word and his world.

-Sos & Kara Maletougou

February Assignments

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



Nursery

Parents of the month:
Mike & Laura J

February 2

AM Luke & Sarah H, Rob & Megan H
PM Marty & Kris VP, Adam & Robin F

February 9

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

February 16

AM Jake & Trena VW, Joe & Erin E
PM Jeff & Sara P, Tom & Ruth C

February 23

AM Jason & Dani W, Kurt & Sharon V
PM Pam & Dennis DJ, Kathy DW

March 1

AM Erik & Barb H, Ryan & Angela H
PM Nick & Jenni B, Lee R



Coffee Servers

Jan B, Dennis DJ, Sharon D,
Marilyn M, Jake VW, Dani W



Greeters

AM Erin E, Rin G, Rog VH



Ushers

AM Daryl H, Lee R, Stan VB

Substitutes

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

Marge DB, Bob DS, Lisa C,
Cheri H, Len R, Trena VW



Pastoral Group Dinners will start up in March! Watch for a full schedule in next month's Courier! The Hibma/Eggebeen Pastoral Group will kick things off on March 1.

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 17** for the March issue.

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/20-1/19/20) \$15,657	\$17,365	+\$1,708
Missions	(1/1/20-1/19/20) \$1,365	\$650	-\$715
Christian Education	(8/1/19-1/19/20) \$93,594	\$102,340	+\$8,746

Notes from the Deacons

Confessions of a Miser

Fellow brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am a bit of a miser. I know, I'm as shocked as you are. Who knew that a simple chapter from *The Deacons' Handbook* on "Leading Your Congregation in Stewardship" would shine a light on my soul's dark underbelly. (Not sure if a soul can have an "underbelly," but I'm sticking with it.)

The chapter began by defining stewardship as taking care of something that has been given to you by someone else. Great, no problem there. I went to Dordt. I get stewardship—I bring my own reusable bags into Fareway! The author goes on to declare that our budgets at home and at church reveal who we worship and what things top our priority lists. At this point, I was still feeling pretty good about myself. Giving generously each Sunday is not a problem.

But then it happened. The author started to list out those things that been entrusted to us by God. She did not limit it to money, but included time, talents, home, and family as well. She also brought up the concept of

firstfruits. Thus began the dreaded time of soul searching because, you see, I closely guard my time. Ah, precious time. Like many of you, I feel pretty busy with family, work, church, friends... I started wondering what the "Firstfruits" of my time would look like. I think, if I am honest, my time priorities go in this order: family, work, church. Therefore, you will often find me at meetings following the time-honored tradition of making as little eye contact as possible when extra jobs are being handed out. I am as bad as my students! Who would like to be on a committee for... Who wants to attend the Classis meeting... Who wants to write an article for the Courier... I occasionally want to quickly shout, "NOT IT!" So there you have it. I am a miser.

I felt chastened by that chapter—but also inspired to challenge my fellow congregants to do some soul searching as well. (MISERy loves company, after all. See what I did there?) You see, it is getting to be that time of year when we retire three deacons and three elders. This week we started talking about compiling a list of members to replace them. As a newbie, I asked about that process and was told that we usually ask around 20 people and are rejected by most of them. Yikes. *The Deacons' Handbook* said, "We do not need to fear the wolf at the door as much as the miser in our

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Note from the Deacons

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hearts.” So all you Kuyper-loving-maniacs, the challenge from your brothers and sisters in the council is this: ask yourselves, “How can my whole life show that Jesus is my Lord?”

Phew. I’m glad I got all that off my chest. Stay tuned to the next Courier when I confess to hating cleaning my house and hiding snacks from my kids in my sock drawer.

-For the Deacons, Luanne Goslinga

Serving at Covenant

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



In December our pastoral group helped out at the Gospel Mission in Sioux City. We served lunch to the people who were there. I was in charge of making sure there were enough desserts available. The people who were not serving were washing dishes. We even had enough people that some people went to the basement and put together hygiene bags. It wasn't very busy but the director said that it gets busier during the end of the month when their food stamps run out. First the families with kids were served, then the single women, and after that the single men. It felt good to help other people and serve them food.

-Meghan Vos

Lament

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loss of losing someone so devoted to doing the Lord's work in this world and who loved the Lord with his whole heart. “I shall try to keep the wound from healing, in recognition of our living still in the old order of things. I shall try to keep it from healing, in solidarity with those who sit beside me on humanity's mourning bench.” “God is appalled by death.”

There are remembrances deep in my soul from Charlie's words. When a work that he wrote is read, I am bursting with pleasure that he saw so well into the Biblical creation. There is no easy forgetting when all that Charlie did was sealed by his love of the Lord. All he wrote and said were what he believed and envisioned. He never wrote to pain others but to guide them.

Don't think that a lament is a bad thing. It is good for those who love the Lord and love His creation with their whole heart.

-Pam Adams



Don't forget to order your chocolates by February 5! Orders can be returned to Megan Haan or Jenni Mellema.



Kelly & April Crull

- It has been a busy season for our family. Pray for energy and time to support each other.
- Continue to pray for our colleagues, Fede and Olga, who have found themselves in a difficult legal situation. Pray for God's peace and justice to reign in their lives and pray that they will be able to raise enough money to keep their home.

Ben & Tricia Groenewold Van Dyk

- Please pray for us and our students as we get ready to head into the spring semester. Benjamin will be teaching a special course on Philosophy as Care of Self and Society. Tricia will be teaching two sections of Ethics as usual, along with Introduction to Philosophy.
- For peace and mutual respect between Christian and non-Christian students, as well as between students from countries that are at odds with each other.
- For creative solutions to the problem of limited office space (we're up to 4-5 faculty members per office in some offices, which makes sensitive meetings with students a challenge).

Michael & Megan Ribbens

- Unity in South Africa: In late October, South Africa's Springboks rugby team had an exciting World Cup victory. It was amazing to see how sport can break barriers and unite a country. Please pray that

God can use this recent unifying experience, extending it deeper into the fabric of society.

- **Healing:** Continued restoration as we close the year and anticipate 2020. Megan is slowly recovering from being unwell for several months from allergies that affected her body and energy levels—it's been a very discouraging few months for her. Please pray for restored joy, restored energy, and complete healing. Amira has been working hard, and we are thankful to God for the signs of health we see every day. She plans to spend some of her summer vacation researching universities and preparing to take the SAT!
- **Mike's New Role:** Continued clarity and wisdom as Mike redefines his on-the-ground work in South Africa and as he listens, loves, and envisions with Resonate's regional team and partners.
- **New School for Nico:** Nico will end his years in primary school with the close of this school year. He will be attending a new school for high school starting in January, 2020.
- **Ethiopia 2020:** Mike is working with a small team of Ethiopians and Resonate colleagues to explore work in the city of Addis Ababa as well as ministry among Muslims in the Middle East.

Sos & Kara Maletoungou

- Praise be to God for his leading, favor, and provision for The Teacher's Garden project. Pray for God's anointing on its ministry so that its participating teachers will be transformed to make a godly difference in their schools and classrooms.
- Pray for God's ongoing protection, guidance, wisdom and creativity on the Teacher's Garden advisory board.