

Youth Group Updates

It has been a good year so far for Covenant's youth group. We had an influx of new members this year, going from 8 youth last year to 15-17 youth on any given Wednesday night this year. We enjoy the good mix of Senior leadership and underclassmen who are willing to participate. Here is a short list of some activities we have done this year:

- Mystery Night (see photos): We were all assigned characters from well-known books and had to try to figure out why King Henry disappeared. It turns out that Cinderella is pretty evasive and had us all fooled. Its always the quiet ones you need to watch.
- On our lesson nights, we have been work-

ing through a video series from Right Now Media called "Unstuck" on how to maintain a vibrant and active faith walk.

- Nerf gun battle—enough said
- Service work including raking leaves and working at the Christian Ed construction fundraiser with Steve "The Boss" Crull

One of the exciting things we have been working toward this year is a summer SERVE project. We committed 15 of us (12 youth and 3 adults) to going to London, ON this summer from July 11-18. We have been saving for this trip for about 3 years of lasagna suppers. Our savings, and a portion of the money set aside by Council, will be used to pay the registration fees for all of us—and we are very thankful to Covenant for everyone's generosity. Our

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Courier

March 2020

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

A Note from the Elders

Greetings, dear Covenant sisters and brothers! It's the month of March and changes are happening. We're enjoying more and more daylight; Spring is getting closer and closer. This month, the Council is also implementing the Safe Church Policy that has been in development and fine-tuning for many months. Let me just remind you of this policy, which has been described in this note before, and also in a letter to all members of the congregation by Safe Church Coordinator, Rebecca De Smith. We will begin to lock all outer doors except the main one, during the service; the nursery will be accessible by one door only; council members and volunteers have been trained; the congregation has been kept abreast of developments of the safe church policy.

Implementation of the above will be in place beginning this Sunday, March 1. Just a reminder that all the usual doors will be open from 8:30 till about 10:10 AM. At 10:10 AM, all doors but the main one under the canopy will be locked and that one, unlocked main door, will be monitored. Someone will be there to greet and welcome late-comers. The locked doors will all have signs on them, directing people to the main door. Making Covenant an accessible and welcoming place for all who want to worship is always our primary goal. In our current age of increasing public violence, one of our priorities is also to plan and be prepared for any possible occurrence of this. If you have any questions, you may contact or approach our Safe Church Coordinator, Rebecca De Smith, or any of our elders.

This first Sunday of March is also the First Sunday of the Lenten Season. During this time of reflection on the suffering of our Savior and on self-examination and repentance in our

own lives, we will be receiving the gifts of the life-giving body and blood of Christ, symbolized in the bread and juice every week. Let us come to the joyful feast of the Lord for his people—those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness and peace.

-Sanneke Kok

A Note from Rebecca

I am grateful to the council and the worship committee for the opportunity to attend the Calvin Worship Symposium in Grand Rapids. The highlight of the symposium for me was the worship. At five worship services in two days, we were led by organ and worship teams, a mariachi band and a choir. We sang in Spanish, we sang as the Native Americans sing, we moved, we took communion. We sang familiar hymns that brought tears to my eyes and new arrangements of Psalms that gave the words and the singers new life. Among the worship leaders, preachers, and speakers were men and women from around the world.

The theme this year was “1 Peter: Living in Hope and Grace.” The worship services and preaching explored the truth expressed in 1 Peter that suffering is a vital part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. And using Peter’s words, the services also offered immense encouragement and challenge to the church of 2020. I’ve found myself heading back to the book of 1 Peter often since the conference to read again the encouraging and challenging words. And I’ll share them with you too:

- But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. 1 Peter 1:15
- As you come to [Christ], the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living

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Note from Rebecca

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stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

- ...be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 1 Peter 3:8
- Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To

him be the power for ever and ever.
Amen. 1 Peter 5:8-11

We don't need to be reminded that these are hard times we live in. But we do need to be reminded of Christ. Every week we come again to worship to fix our eyes not on the devil prowling around us but on Jesus, "the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. Let us consider him who endured such opposition from sinful people, so that we will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1-2). It is our prayer as we begin planning for Lent and preparing for a season of weekly communion, that as we gather on Sunday mornings we will continue to do just this.

-Rebecca DeVries

Youth Group Update

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goal is to raise the travel costs (estimated at around \$2,500—including vehicle rental and typical travel expenses) by offering services to all of you. We have youth and energy on our side. A couple of ideas so far:

- Taking down your Christmas lights
- Spring yard cleaning
- Rent-a-Student: If someone knows of a need for one of our members and would like us to take care of it, let us know.

In closing, please remember our youth in your prayers every week. We have a good group of students and have families who have committed to making youth group a priority, which makes being involved with this group a rewarding experience for us all.

-Andy Landman



March Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Caleb Smit	8	Amaliah Feliciano Sara Ploegstra	19	Benjamin Groenewold Cheri Horstman
2	Jerry Plasier				
4	Brian Mellema Lee Rhoda	10	Jeff Ploegstra Lila Sybesma	20	Carol Apol Mark Tazelaar
5	Ben Bailey Annika Goslinga	11	Benjamin Ploegstra Del Vander Zee	21	Wil & Jo A
6	Mark McCarthy	14	Kaase Van Niejenhuis Mike & Laura Janssen Roger & Linda Vanden Hoek	23	Richard Eggebeen Victoria Eggebeen Mike Janssen Tricia Van Dyk Beth Vanden Berg
7	Emma Mercado Castelan Thijs Van Niejenhuis	17	Sean Hannigan	25	Emma Haan



Offering Schedule

March 1

AM General Fund

March 8

AM Christian Education Fund

March 15

AM Missions Fund

March 22

AM World Renew: US Disaster Response

March 29

AM Building Fund

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

March 1: Ron Vos and World Renew

March 8: Pastor Keo and Siouxland Unity CRC

March 15: WE Service—Passover theme with a meal

March 22: Jake & Trena Van Wyk

March 29: 5:00—Teaching Service
6:00—GEMS service at Faith CRC



WWW@Cov on February 26



Potluck ♦ 5:30 PM

Please RSVP at the welcome table!

Sandwiches provided

Last names A-K: dessert, L-Z: side/salad

Ash Wednesday Worship ♦ 6:30 PM

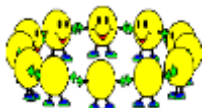
Worship service with imposition of ashes.

The service will be brief so you can attend other Wednesday night church activities.

March Assignments

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

Remember to wear your name badges!



Nursery

March 1

AM Erik & Barb H, Ryan & Angela H

PM Nick & Jenni B, Lee R

March 8

AM Dave & Emily K, Laura L

PM Chris & Rin G, Bob & Rebecca DS

March 15

AM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Tricia K

PM (no nursery)

March 22

AM Eldon & Marcia W, Andy & Rachel L

PM Duane & Jan B, Steve & Pat C

March 29

AM Alejandro & Isabel C, Barb T

PM Daryl & Deb H, John & Linda V

April 5

AM Dave & Jeri S, Laura J

PM Doug & Marge DB, Mark & Lisa C



Coffee Servers

Mark C, Cal J, Tricia K,

Andy L, Shirley M, Beth VB



Greeters

AM Jenni B, Robin F, Kurt V



Ushers

AM Chris G, Joan MC, Shaun S

Substitutes

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

Wil A, Duane B, Pam DJ,

George F, Dennis VP, Del VZ

Pastoral Group

Dinner Schedule



March 1—Hibma/Eggebeen

March 22—Ploegstra/Haan

March 29—DeSmith/Wielard

April 5—Kok/Goslinga

April 19—Schaap/Vander Plaats

April 26—Bailey/Oostra

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, **March 23** for the April issue.

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/20-2/16/20) \$36,534	\$39,449	+\$2,914
Missions	(1/1/20-2/16/20) \$3,185	\$2,8883	-\$302
Christian Education	(8/1/19-2/16/20) \$108,569	\$115,084	+\$6,515

Notes from the Deacons

Many hands make light work and also help raise funds for the Christian Education Fund! Those of us on the committee would like to thank so many in the congregation for helping in so many different ways the last couple of months. We have worked on a construction project, made homemade chocolates, and of course gave regularly to the fund through offerings. Because of your help as a congregation we have been able to stay up to date on our payments to Unity Christian, Western Christian, Orange City Christian, and Sioux Center Christian.

Thank you to all the those who made candy for our Chocolate Fundraiser: Kathy DeWit, Nancy Vanden Bosch, Shirley Matheis, Jan

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Note from the Deacons

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Bajema, Carol Oostra, Pat Crull, Tricia Kok, Luanne Goslinga, Kris Vander Plaats, and Megan Haan. And thank you to everyone who came out to help box up the candy! It was a sweet way to build community and raise some funds.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the construction project so far! A special thanks to those who have been out to the construction site multiple times or took the

lead on certain parts of the project: Cal Jongsma, Bernie DeWit, John Visser, Joe Eggebeen, Duane Bajema, Dennis DeJong, Daryl Hibma, Ron Oostra, Steve Crull and many more!

We appreciate all your time, talent, and treasure as we work to raise funds for Christian Education!

Save the date for our next event: Host and Hostess Dinner, Friday, April 24.

-For the Deacons, Megan Haan

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 seven or eight years, I've been involved in teaching English as a second language. Currently I have a class of three ladies that meets at the Sioux Center Public Library on Tuesday afternoons. Two of them have been in my class since it started. When it happens that I am not in town at class time, I am frequently blessed to have Sanneke Kok teach for me. She filled in for me for a couple of months when Sherry died, and has been there on numerous other occasions. The ladies in the class love her.

During the last few years, I have also worked with a gentleman at his home on Thursday evenings.

I deeply appreciate the people I get to work with. I enjoy teaching and I very much enjoy interacting with the people I teach.

-Marv Wielard

Living Service

Carol Oostra asked if I would share with Covenant members what I consider the ways God has directed my life into community and global service and the benefits.

Several years ago, I received this request from my grandson:

Grandpa, we are studying Heroes-of-Faith in our Bible Class. My assignment is to write a paper nominating someone as a Hero of Faith. I want to nominate you.

(To the reader: How would you answer this request?)

Upon reading with considered interest the two chapters of Hebrews that tell of the heroes of faith, I settled on this description. By faith ordinary people did something extraordinary. Further reflection concluded their lives were directed by God. This may not have been a pillar of fire, but there was the power of God in whatever form that might take. By faith I recognized God had directed my path each step of the way.

Following are some of those experiences and

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Living Service

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what I learned:

I worked at the Ireton shop of Hope Haven International Ministries making parts, assembling, and boxing the KID's wheelchairs. I often thought, "Why am I doing this?" "Somewhere in some country of need this chair is giving a child of God mobility." "This makes this kind of work worthwhile." "Do it right." "I would like to see the person who receives this chair."

I made two trips to Viet Nam to deliver wheelchairs to the "hidden" population in that country. The images of those visits are clear to this day. A mother comes to the distribution site with a mature son hanging around her neck. He is paralyzed from the waist down. Upon receiving a wheelchair, you should have seen the gratitude in the eyes of both the mother and son. They left thanking God for us.

Another man with no legs who made and repaired shoes for a living came to the center to receive a PET (Personal Energy Transportation) chair. He now has mobility for doing his business.

We attended the Christian Reformed Church in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). There was a huge Christmas tree at the pulpit. On that tree were the words in English, "Merry Christmas." They have no word for Christmas. They sang the same hymns we did for years. They have no knowledge of the word of God and His redemption of human beings as revealed in the Bible.

This was the blessing of seeing the faces of those served. The thrill of immediately meeting an evident need. How much larger the

church is than I usually think of it.

Twenty years ago, I was involved in the Farmer-To-Farmer Program in Nicaragua. Today there are more than one hundred itinerant families that own a parcel of land, able to grow their own food, who have produce to sell. They can send their children to school and have built houses (one room with cement floor and tin roof) they can call their own. They thank God for us.

The most disturbing part of these experiences is when I return home from those for whom you wonder, "How can so little mean so much?" I see "How can so much mean so little?" Those who have so little are grateful for what they receive and recognize the source of that gift. We who have so much say we deserve more and appeal to other sources to provide. One of the plagues of affluence is that we have lost the gift of gratitude and giving.

Whether we like it or not we are telling our story from one generation to next. (Joel 1) in the way we live. Perhaps we should pay more attention to what we make our priorities.

-Wil Alberda



**Friday, March 6
6:30 PM
Dordt Game Room**

Join us in the Dordt University game room (lower level of the Campus Center) for a night of fun with the Covenant family! Go bowling, play air hockey or pool, or bring your own board game to play! Bring your own beverage and a snack to share!