

Note from Pastoral Joel—COVID Update Edition!

Dear Covenant Friend,

On Sunday morning, we will invite three (rather than two) pastoral groups to worship in the church sanctuary, and on Sunday evening, we will hold an in-person prayer service in the church fellowship hall.

The Covid Task Force brought several recommendations to the Covenant Church Council on July 20. The Council approved the recommendations that will guide us this coming Sunday (July 26), throughout the month of August also, and into the beginning of a new school year. As with all plans during this time, these plans are tentative. They express what we discerned as a fitting way to proceed. We can summarize them as follows:

1. Sunday Use of Church Building:

- a. Mornings: By inviting three of the six pastoral groups each Sunday, we invite everyone on every other Sunday. E.g. on July 26, members of Pastoral Groups 1, 2, and 3 are invited; on August 2, members of Pastoral Groups 4, 5, and 6 are invited. We will continue to practice social distancing and encourage mask wearing and other protocols.
- b. Evenings: By meeting in the Fellowship Hall, we take another opening step while

continuing to practice protocols. On July 26 at 5 PM, Pastoral Joel will do some teaching and convene a time of prayer. A similar gathering will take place on August 2, and we hope (weather permitting) to offer praise and prayers around a bonfire on August 9.

2. Sunday Morning Education Ministry

- a. We will seek alternative ways of teaching for all generations until resuming our regular Sunday School schedule in January.
- b. The Education Committee, the Elders, and other members will seek creative ways for learning that transform the season of the virus into a season of discipleship.

3. GEMS Meetings on Alternate Wednesdays

- a. The leaders of GEMS requested the use of the Covenant Church building so that they can resume the ministry that has taken place here for some time. Council approved.
- b. Leaders from Covenant will meet with leaders from GEMS in order to clarify protocols regarding what parts of the building can be used the responsibilities for cleaning.

(Continued on page 8)

Congratulations, Ryan & Laura!

Sometimes in life there are curveballs and unexpected events. Sometimes in life there are friends (you know who you are) that are like family and they support you without waver through those road bumps. Sometimes there is a church (that's you, Covenant CRC!) that loves you and showers you with kindness. Sometimes, despite not seeing a way out, by the grace of God, you find yourself on the other side. Well, here I am, on the other side with a thankful and joyful heart.

What started out as strangers with daughters who are best friends who wanted a sleepover, turned into a marriage with 6 kids. Let me break this down for you. Ryan and I met at The Fruited Plain Café for coffee so that we could get to know each other for the girls' sakes. (I did, after all, have to make sure that

Ryan was a trustworthy single dad whom I could trust with my oldest daughter!) After that 3.5-hour coffee "date", we never looked back. We were married about a year after our first real date. Time and time again we marvel at how we didn't know the other existed for over 5 years and that we lived all that time less than a mile from each other. God's timing, my friends.

So, please allow me the privilege of introducing you to Ryan and his 3 amazing daughters. Ryan was born and raised in Sioux Center. He did various jobs until he landed at Premier Communications about 13 years ago. He is one of their business sales reps. He loves to have fun and laugh, he adores the kids, and tolerates my girls' cats. He's kind, endlessly

(Continued on page 3)



Congratulations, Ryan & Laura!

(Continued from page 2)

supportive, and generous. Our children have many of his qualities and have adjusted to blending our family with such grace. Aniah is the oldest. She is 14 and entering 8th grade. She is strong, wise beyond her years, and has a passionate heart. She also loves sports and people. Eden is 12 and will be entering 6th grade at SCCS. She loves volleyball (and once served 17 points in a row for her AAU team!), has a mama's heart for children and pets, and loves to dance. The girl has moves that I will never do (without throwing out my back).

Adria is 8 and is going to be in 2nd grade at SCCS. She is a great reader, writes amazing stories, and is likely one of the most naturally funny people I know. Her laugh can make anyone laugh right along with her.

I often say that I can't believe this is my life. I never, ever would have imagined this, but I would never, ever change it. My joy from ashes. I love this family...all 8 of us (2 cats, and a puppy) and I know you do, too. And for that I'm forever grateful.

-Laura DeKruyf

2020 Mask Fashion at Covenant CRC



Seeing, talking to, and worshipping with our church family with masks on takes a bit of getting used to these days, but we're doing it with style! Unicorns, the Eiffel Tower, pandas, elephants, and fabrics in all colors and patterns were gracing the faces of our church members in our outdoor service on July 19. And just in case you don't recognize the faces behind the masks:

Top left: Sharon, Meghan, and Aidan Vos

Top right: Lewis, Lydia, and Liam Clark

Bottom left: Richard, Deirdre, Victoria, and Zoey Eggebeen

August Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Marge DeBoer	8	Rin Goedhart Ron Oostra	19	Steve Crull
2	Ruth Clousing Pat Eggebeen	9	Ron & Carol Oostra	20	Barb Mellema Shaun Stiemsma
3	Rob Haan Sos Maletougou Laurey Zwart Dave & Luanne Goslinga	11	Dani Wyenberg Robbin & Sara Eppinga	21	Derek Friend John & Linda Visser
4	Max Hoekstra Ryan & Angela Hannigan	12	Benjamin & Tricia Groenewold-Van Dyk	23	Chris Goedhart John Zwart
5	Caden Zonnefeld	13	Kathleen Van Tol	26	Len & Lee Rhoda
6	Ezra Landman Lee Mellema	15	Deb Hibma Ryan & Amie Smit	27	Matt Drissell
7	George Faber Jeff & Sara Ploegstra	16	Blake Stiemsma John & Laurey Zwart	28	Elise Stiemsma
		17	Jake & Trena Van Wyk	29	Shonna Plasier Dave Schelhaas
		18	Del & Lois Vander Zee	30	Melissa Bailey



Offering Schedule

August 2

AM General Fund

August 9

AM Christian Education Fund

August 16

AM Missions Fund

August 23

AM Compassion/Tuition Assistance Fund

August 30

AM Building Fund

You are a Blessing!

Thank you for your church's gift to ministry shares. Your gift makes it possible for us to share God's story of grace, hope and love. We could not impact the world through missions, media, and church development without your incredible and faithful support. To learn more about the work you support, visit crcna.org/ministryshares.

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, **August 24** for the September issue.

August Scheduling

Sunday Scheduling

None of our normal monthly volunteers will be needed for August. The nursery will remain closed as well this month, so nursery volunteers will not be needed.

Formation Sunday Evenings

Join us for our 5:00 PM gatherings this month! All gatherings will be in the fellowship hall unless we communicate otherwise.

July 26: Teaching with Pastor Joel

August 2: Prayer Meeting

August 9: Evening of Praise and Prayer

August 16: Teaching with Pastor Joel

August 23: Teaching with Pastor Joel

August 30: Teaching with Pastor Joel

August Worship Schedule

July 26: Pastoral Groups 1,2,3 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, DeSmith/Feikema)

August 2: Pastoral Groups 4,5,6 (Brue/Goslinga, Schaap/Rowe, Rhoda/Sybesma)

August 9: Pastoral Groups 1,2,3 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, DeSmith/Feikema)

August 16: Pastoral Groups 4,5,6 (Brue/Goslinga, Schaap/Rowe, Rhoda/Sybesma)

August 23: Outdoor Service at Heritage Village—all are welcome

August 30: Pastoral Groups 1,2,3 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, DeSmith/Feikema)

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/20-7/19/20) \$151,355	\$137,323	-\$14,032
Missions	(1/1/20-7/19/20) \$13,195	\$10,707	-\$2,488
Christian Education	(8/1/19-7/19/20) \$190,931	\$184,043	-\$6,888

Notes from the Deacons

My grandmother had a rather ugly wall hanging in her bedroom on which some really beautiful words were inscribed: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.” This passage has been important to me as both a parent and as a Christian educator. I teach out of the same Prentice Hall textbook as many public schools across the nation. The essays, stories, and poems kids read are the same—but Christian education seeks to “acknowledge God” in all of it. What a gift!

Like most gifts, Christian education comes at a cost. As a church, we come together to help our Covenant kids afford their time in Christian school. For the 2019-2020 school year, the amount of our commitment to this end was \$194,675. I know, that’s a big commitment! It breaks down by month like this: OC-CS/\$145.83, SCCS/\$12,500, UCHS/\$2,525, WCHS/\$1,052. This comes to a grand total of \$16,222.92 that Covenant must raise each month. We have until July 31 to come up with roughly \$9,000 and we will have successfully met our financial promise to Christian education. I think we will make it this year. Some years we don’t.

Fundraising is an important part of reaching these numbers. Some churches have pancake breakfasts or work silage piles, other churches sell pies or pizzas. Covenant seems to do most of our fundraising by small construction projects like putting up roofs or the current retaining wall project happening at the Clark home. This coming year we have some possible dirt work for Marv Wielard and another

sheetrock project in Sioux Center that we are looking at doing. If we want to get really ambitious there is a larger project out by Marcus that would require demo and framing. Covenant could really get in touch with our “inner Chip Gaines” and have an amazing demo day to release all our Covid-related frustrations. The Christian Education committee will keep you posted. We’d really like to do more hours on the silage pile projects in the fall, but this will require all hands on deck as we will need lots of child care for the able bodied adult volunteers.

Thank you so much for your generous giving this year. Thank you for the generous donation of your time on these projects. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

-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.

Resonate Global Mission sent us information about this opportunity, and we thought some in the Covenant church family might be interested in it as a way to reach out and serve in your neighborhood right here in Sioux Center!



JOINING GOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD An Online Cohort

WHAT IS IT?

Gather with others online, sharing and learning together about what God might be up to in our neighborhoods.

- 4 sessions (90 minutes) on Zoom
- Learn from and with others
- Listen to scripture
- Listen in our neighborhoods
- Learn new missional practices

WHEN IS IT?

Tuesday evenings from 7:30 – 9:00pm on Zoom
August 11, 25
September 8, 22

WHO IS IT FOR?

Anybody who wants to discover more about their neighborhood and new ways of following God in mission.

Individuals are welcome. Teams from a church are encouraged!

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL!

That's what Jesus said. And he was quick to add, "But the laborers are few. (Luke 10:2)

How might God be calling us, his present-day disciples, to become Kingdom harvesters right in our own neighborhoods?

In *Joining God in Your Neighborhood* participants learn how to listen to God, others and our neighborhood in order to discover where God is at work and join him in mission.

In this action-reflection-learning process you will cultivate and learn from habits that God can use to bring in His harvest.

For more information or to sign up contact:

Ruth Kelder (Go Local Facilitator for the Central U.S. region)

rkelder@crcna.org

815.690.2410

For more on the entire Go Local process this is adapted from:

<https://www.resonateglobalmission.org/go-local>

Note from Pastor Joel

(Continued from page 1)

If you have further thoughts and questions about this plan, please know you can speak with Pastor Joel or your Elder. We all continue to walk by faith not by sight during this uncertain time, and we all seek the faith active in love that our Lord desires for us.

In Christ,

-Pastor Joel, on behalf of the Council



New Elder Intro

Last month we were introduced to the four new deacons who recently began serving in the Covenant Council. This month we introduce our three new elders! Thanks to each of them for their willingness to serve our church family!

My wife, Donna, and I have made Sioux Center (and Covenant) our home for the past 20 years. We have three children, Kinza (a middle school teacher in Pease, MN), Jaren (studying engineering and music at Dordt), and Rylan (studying theology and philosophy at Dordt). I have the privilege of teaching in the engineering program at Dordt. Growing up on a farm in South Dakota gave me a love for stewarding wide open spaces, which may explain my introverted personality. I enjoy a wide variety of hobbies ranging from general tinkering, home repair, gardening, music, writing, history, hiking, and a variety of sports. This guarantees that I will never become noticeably competent in any one of them. We enjoy worshiping and serving at Covenant.

-Ethan Brue

My name is Jill Friend and I look forward to serving as an elder at Covenant CRC. I teach music at Sioux Center Christian School and work part-time for Faith Formation Ministries of the CRCNA. We have lived in Sioux Center for 10 years and previously lived near Boone, Iowa. We have three grown children and a grandson who live in Ontario, Canada, Sioux Center and Reno, Nevada. We enjoy road trips, visiting National Parks, and hiking. I also enjoy crocheting, sewing, and reading.

-Jill Friend

My roots are in Indiana; and after meeting Lee at Calvin College, we lived in Bellflower, CA, and St. Louis, MO, before settling here in Sioux Center. It is hard to believe that I retired from teaching at Dordt fifteen years ago; and our family has grown to include three children, eight grandchildren (five with spouses), and six beautiful great grandchildren. Relatively good health has allowed us to enjoy family, travelling, volunteering, and participation in university and community events. I feel blessed to be serving as an elder with outstanding leaders of Covenant Church.

-Len Rhoda