

Sunday School Update

This letter was sent out in an email, but we are printing it here as well, hoping to reach as many families as possible!

Dear Sunday School Children and Covenant Family,

We have changed plans a lot in the past few months. Many of these changes have been difficult because it means that we have less time to spend together. We plan to begin weekly Sunday School in January, rather than this month. We miss each another. Our church family misses one another.

While some of our gathering together has changed, our love for Jesus and our rest in God's love for us never changes. I am so grateful for the gift of God's faithfulness, aren't you? When I am tempted to feel so many yucky emotions because I am disappointed, scared, or uncertain, I am reminded of God's deep, rich, and mysterious love for me and for all of His children. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

At Sunday school, we normally gather offering for different ministries helping people in Sioux Center or in other places around the world. Did you know that many people in our community (maybe a neighbor and many you may not know) are struggling right now because of so many hard things in their lives? Some have a difficult time paying rent for where they live; others have difficulty buying food or supplies. Even though we aren't meeting weekly all together for worship at our building, we are still invited by God to be His hands and feet to our community and to one another. We get to be more creative in how we do that.

This year, rather than collecting money at Sunday School, we are going to collect items to donate to Mid-Sioux and Hope Food Pantry. Rather than children's ministries doing this, the Education Committee is inviting the entire church to join us in this outreach. Each month, we will highlight a different item to bring to church. Volunteers will deliver these items to help others in our community. (See more information at the end of this article)

I challenge you, students, to think about ways that you can:

- help remind your family to bring the items to church.
- motivate your family and other Covenant church members to participate
- pray for the individuals who will receive these items.
- brainstorm ways to personally donate your time or money (not a parent's) and make some decisions on what you buy from the store to donate.
- use your creativity to give generously and joyfully.

It's going to be great to give!

I also want to take a moment to tell you how excited we are to begin Sunday School in January and grateful for the willingness of the following teachers:

- 1st - Megan Haan
- 2nd - Angela Hannigan
- 3rd - Jenni Breems
- 4th - Lisa Christians
- 5th - Erin Eggebeen
- 6th - Chris Goedhart
- 7th/8th - Robin Fedders
- 9th/10th - Sanneke Kok
- 11th/12th - Pastor Joel

(Continued on page 3)

Note from the Elders

The council, at its meeting this week, approved a recommendation by the Covid Task Force to continue to invite three pastoral groups to in-person worship each week, while also amending the practice to allow members or families to attend each week when they feel that best suits their spiritual health.

Six months into this pandemic, we are all tiring of it and tired of not being back to “normal” and enjoying fellowship with our community of believers. We continue to hear appreciation from members for the livestream option and will continue to offer this as we follow guidelines from the CDC and local health professionals. (Again last week, we received a communication from Community Health Partners urging us to continue to fol-

low such guidelines as cases of Covid 19 have been rising in Sioux County.) If weekly attendance increases to the point that we cannot follow distancing guidelines, we will reconsider this decision.

The council is keenly aware that the pandemic can negatively affect the spiritual health of our members of our congregation and of the body of Christ. The elders will devote much of their meeting this coming week to prayer for members and for wisdom as to how to lead and live as a congregation during this time. We commend each member of Covenant to our Lord’s care and will continue to find ways to care for each other.

For the Elders,
-Sally Jongsma

Sunday School Update

(Continued from page 2)

And here is some information about our giving opportunity this year:

Our Goal:

To bring one box of these products to each food pantry each month to help keep their shelves stocked.

Here are the suggested items:

- September: Canned vegetables and/or canned fruit
- October: Paper products (toilet paper, paper towels, diapers)
- November: Peanut butter and jelly/jam

The calendar for the rest of the school year is found in the letter that was emailed to you. We’ll give reminders each month as well!

Other Details:

- Of course, you may bring any kind of food or non-perishable items each month.
- If you choose not to worship in-person at this time, there will be a box for food donations in the NE entry way of church. Drop your items off whenever it’s convenient for you.

Please join us in being the hands and feet of Jesus to members of our community!

Your sister in Christ,
-Ruth Clark, Sunday School Coordinator

*“Each of you should give whatever you have decided . . . since God loves a cheerful giver.”
II Corinthians 9:7*

October Birthdays & Anniversaries

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----|-------------------------------------|----|--|
| 1 | Dave Goslinga Judah Hawley | 10 | Samuel Westfall | 24 | Sophia Bailey Lydia Clark Marv Wielard |
| 2 | Ethan Brue Ava Landman | 13 | David Westfall | 25 | Layne Vos |
| 3 | Alleke Crull | 14 | Finley Drissell | 27 | Dave & Emily Kramer |
| 5 | Ed Brummel Anna Christians | 15 | Mark Horstman Dan & Sandi Altena | 28 | Julia Kramer Linda Vanden Hoek |
| 7 | Eric Rowe | 17 | Zoe Hoekstra | 29 | Nick Breems Tina Dekker Jonathan Van Tol |
| 9 | Emma Henreckson Steve Holtrop Kara Maletougou Samuel Maletougou Ed & Natalie Brummel | 18 | Pam DeJong | 30 | Emilyn Smit Pete Vander Plaats |
| | | 19 | Pat Crull Laura Janssen | | |
| | | 20 | Esther Eppinga | | |
| | | 21 | Erin Eggebeen | | |



Offering Schedule

October 4

AM General/Building Fund

October 11

AM Christian Education Fund

October 18

AM Missions Fund

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, **October 19** for the November issue.

October 25

AM World Renew

A Note from Cornerstone Prison Church:

We want to thank you for your prayer support and financial support in the past and recently. We ask that you keep this church in your prayers as we look to a transition in leadership as Pastor Doug and Lee have accepted a call to the Rock Rapids CRC beginning October 1. We thank them for their years of service to this church behind the walls of the SDSP and wish them God's blessing. We also ask that God will lead us to find the right person to fill the position of lead pastor at Cornerstone.

-Ambassador Board of
Cornerstone Prison Church

October Scheduling

Sunday Scheduling

None of our normal monthly volunteers will be needed for October. 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!

September 27: Jake & Trena Van Wyk

October 4: Jeff Taylor

October 11: Gil Kamps

October 18: Fred Wilgenberg (New Roots Ministry)

October 25: To be determined

October Worship Schedule

September 27: Pastoral Groups 4,5,6 (Brue/Goslinga, Schaap/Rowe, Rhoda/Sybesma)

October 4: Pastoral Groups 1,2,3 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, DeSmith/Feikema)

October 11: Pastoral Groups 4,5,6 (Brue/Goslinga, Schaap/Rowe, Rhoda/Sybesma)

October 18: Pastoral Groups 1,2,3 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, DeSmith/Feikema)

October 25: Pastoral Groups 4,5,6 (Brue/Goslinga, Schaap/Rowe, Rhoda/Sybesma)

Dear congregation of Covenant Christian Reformed Church,
We praise God for the 2019-20 Legacy Plan gift of \$150,000 Sioux Center Christian School has received from your congregation. What a blessing it is for us to receive these gifts that you have collected in so many ways—offerings, shingling, chocolates, and more! Your support is vital as we daily pursue our vision of every child treasured, trained, and transformed as they learn and live God’s Story. Thank you!

-Sioux Center Christian School

Giving To Date

| Fund | Budgeted | Received | Difference |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| General | (1/1/20-9/20/20) \$198,328 | \$173,998 | -\$24,330 |
| Missions | (1/1/20-9/20/20) \$17,290 | \$13,786 | -\$3,504 |
| Christian Education | (8/1/20-9/20/20) \$29,352 | \$30,840 | +\$1,488 |

Notes from the Deacons

The denomination of the Christian Reformed Church established Ministry Shares as a way for congregations to work together in missions and ministry. By working together, they could make a bigger impact. To raise funds for Ministry Shares, the denomination allocated a set amount per member per congregation. In recent years that amount was \$346/member. For our congregation that came to approximately \$62,000-\$64,000 per year the last two years. Because many congregations could not/did not contribute the allocated amount, the denomination through Synod 2016 decided the “ministry shares program be reimagined”. At the special meeting of the Council of Delegates in June of this year, it was approved that congregations come up with a pledge amount for their congregation instead of having an amount allocated to them.

Covenant formed an Ad Hoc committee consisting of Pastor Joel, Bernie DeWit, Barb Schaap, Adam Fedders, and Kris Vander Plaats to explore the options suggested by the CRC and to make a recommendation. After much discussion, the committee proposed that we increase our pledge amount from \$30,000 which our congregation committed the last two years to \$33,000. This is an increase of 10%. One of the options suggested was an increase of 5% over the previous year. The committee wanted to challenge the congregation in its giving but also wanted the pledge amount to be attainable. The proposal was brought before the deacons and approved. This pledge amount will be for the ministry year that begins July 1, 2021.

-Kris Vander Plaats

And a quick note received from CRCNA:

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

Sunday School & Children’s Worship

Offering for September



(canned fruits and vegetables)

Offering for October:



(paper products: toilet paper, paper towels, diapers)

Singing Our Way Forward

Whenever Courier week comes around, Sara asks Pastor Joel and me if we have anything to contribute. What would I write that's worth reading, I wonder. That life is hard? That church is hard? That I find myself having the same feelings as I did the first week of the shutdown—six months ago—when I last wrote an article for the Courier. I wrote “in each new situation I just want to know how long things will be like this. I want so badly to know what life will look like tomorrow, and a week from now and this summer. ‘How long, O Lord?’ And we just don’t know. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a picture...a promise of what life will look like.”

In March, when the work of life was hard, I found comfort and hope in the words of Isaiah 65 where God promises a new heaven and a new earth, a place where we will labor—building and planting—and long enjoy the work of our hands, where our labor will not be in vain, where are tears will be no more. And it was through a song that God reminded me of this promise.

I forget these promises sometimes. I can lose sight of them so quickly and focus instead on all that is wrong and hard. I’ll guess some of you do too. What do we do about that?

I’m reminded of traditional African-American spirituals, likely developed among slaves who sang while they worked. I don’t mean to compare my current situation to that of slaves, but I believe we can be grateful for the heritage of their songs. Many of them paint pictures of what was to come. They get us singing, as singer/songwriter Sandra McCracken says, not about where we are in the moment,

but where we are going and that we will get there. They “sing us forward sometimes with tears, sometimes with defiance, sometimes with great celebration.”

So what do we do? Let’s sing our way forward. Let’s sing more songs about heaven, songs about God making all things new, songs about plowshares and all nations and crossing over Jordan, songs about Jesus coming again, songs that lift our hearts and our eyes up to the Lord. And then, let’s keep praying and working together for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Here’s my short list and another playlist:

<https://music.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZRB6kBhitR1zpGgTcaTuAMLSNMf0qEDp>

Up Above My Head
Give Me Jesus
On Jordan’s Stormy Banks
The Day of the Lord (Psalm 37)
We Will Say in that Day (Isaiah 12)
God’s Highway
We Will Feast
In the Fields of the Lord
Your Labor is Not in Vain
Is He Worthy
O Day of Peace
My Soul Cries Out
Soon and Very Soon
In the Day of Lord
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

-Rebecca DeVries

2020 Good Fellowship Picnic

God blessed us with beautiful weather and Heritage Village provided a beautiful setting for a time of fellowship outdoors with our church family following the morning worship service on September 13. It was good to be together!

