

Lent at Covenant

We invite you to take advantage of the various opportunities that are being offered for worship and faith formation during this season of Lent.

A Lenten Loom

We invite you to pray with your hands. In the fellowship hall you will find a large loom and a variety of fabrics and yarn. As you weave, project your prayers onto the fabric. As the season progresses and as we collaborate on this project, we will have a visual representation of our conversations with God and also be reminded that just as these fabrics are weaved together, so too are our lives and longings knit together in God. As one member bent down to weave this week, she found herself on her knees—and as she shared, it's not a bad place to be.



The Kindness Tree

Look for acts of kindness in your life. Write those acts of kindness on paper leaves and attach them to the dead tree in the Fellowship Hall. Each week, our tree will gain leaves as we grow through acts of kindness. It's been a joy to see the first hints of green on the tree already!



A Lenten Path Reflections

Created by Covenant member Anna Westfall, this booklet exists as a companion to the season of Lent. Copies of *A Lenten Path* are available on the welcome table and in the NE entrance to church. And physical stations will be set up weekly in the old fellowship hall for you to pause at when you wish throughout the week.

Courier

March 2021

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Note from the Elders

It was almost a year ago that our world shut down with the news of a novel coronavirus that was spreading globally at an alarming rate. We were bombarded with news stories from Italy, France, Australia, China, and other areas of the world that were experiencing overwhelming community spread and sickness from a virus that seemed foreign at the time, but now has become common conversation in our everyday lives.

When Covenant suspended in-person worship and moved online, I remember thinking that we'd be "back to normal" by summer. I now smile at that thought—what does "back to normal" even mean? It's quite amazing the perspective change that can happen in just 12 short months. Here we are—Lent 2021—finally seeing the faces of our children in the building and slowly increasing in-person capacity. Vaccines have begun to roll out in our community and I'm feeling the hopeful anticipation that things are moving in a positive direction.

As the Covenant Council, we want to say thank you for the support that the congregation has shown through what has been a very challenging year of leadership. We understand that our church stayed online longer than most, delayed the opening of Sunday School longer than most, and even now has public health guidelines in place that other congregations have chosen not to continue. The Council has chosen a cautious road to ensure we're protecting all of our members and our community, and we thank you for the trust given to us to make these decisions with prayerful wisdom and discernment.

Regardless of the state of the pandemic, it's about this time of year every year in NW Iowa that we look longingly to spring and the days ahead. We know in our heads more snow is probably coming, but our hearts long for warmth, sunshine, and evening walks once again. This spring especially seems filled with hope and possibility, not just in our neck of the woods, but in the corners and creases of many communities that are seeing a way out of the devastation and loss that COVID has caused.

We are blessed by each and every one of you. Spring is coming, Easter is near, the goodness of the Lord has and will continue to surround us all.

May blessings abound,

-Melissa Bailey

Lenten Compline



Join us each Thursday night during Lent at 7:00 PM for a Service of Night Prayer, or Compline. These ½ hour services will use liturgies from the *Book of Common Prayer* that include prayers, psalms, silence, and songs, and will act as a way to gather up the events and cares of our days in prayer. Join us in person or via Livestream beginning on Thursday, February 25.

Salt Sale Update

We hope you have the upcoming Bridge of Hope/Covenant Water Softener Salt Sale Fundraiser on your calendar! The plan is to have a family order sheet in your mail box this Sunday, February 28. If it's not there yet it should be soon! Our goal is for each family to sell 25 bags of salt—this is more attainable for some of our congregation than others, so all we really ask is that you try to sell as much as you are able. Family, friends, and neighbors are all people you can contact about purchasing salt through our fundraiser. Be sure to mention that we deliver the salt

ourselves and put it wherever they would like! Order forms will be due **March 14!**

In the meantime we also need to begin finding people to drive trucks with trailers to deliver the salt. So if you have a truck or trailer and would be willing to drive your truck with a trailer attached or let us use your trailer with someone else's truck, please contact Emily Kramer or Jenni Mellema. Please note that a pallet of salt weighs 2,520 lbs and trailers should be able to comfortably hold this amount. Also keep your eyes peeled for a link to a sign up sheet for workers to help deliver salt on **April 10.**

-Emily Kramer

Faith Formation

Have you checked out any of the resources on Spiritual Disciplines from CRC Faith Formation Ministries? Here is a link again to the Faith Practice Project: <https://www2.crcna.org/FaithFormation/practices> (Click on the available Spiritual Disciplines on the right side of the page to see what is offered.) The faith formation practice for the month of March is listening.



Thank you for your donations each month to Mid-Sioux! This is the trunk packed full of cereal that was collected this past month, ready to be delivered to Mid-Sioux to be shared with those in need!

Sunday School & Children's Worship

Offering for March



Personal Hygiene Products
(toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, soap, feminine products, lotion, etc.)

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



Offering Schedule

March 7

AM General/Building Fund

March 14

AM Christian Education Fund

March 21

AM Missions Fund

March 28

AM World Renew

A Note About Giving

Beginning in March, if a check given to Covenant does not have a designation, the deacons will be handling it the same as we handle checks that say "use where needed most." If there is a designation on the memo line, if it came in an envelope with designations, or if we have instructions on file, we will follow those designations.

If you have any questions about giving, don't hesitate to contact the deacons!

-Kurt Vos, Treasurer

March Scheduling

March Worship Schedule

We'll mix up the rotation again for the next few months so the last few combinations of pastoral groups can worship together. Just a reminder, the pastoral group lists are located toward the back of your church directory and also on our website if you need a reminder about which group you are in!

February 28: Pastoral Groups 1,4,6 (Friend/Eggebeen, Brue/Vos, Rhoda/Sybesma)

March 7: Pastoral Groups 1,2,5 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, Schaap/Rowe)

March 14: Pastoral Groups 3,4,6 (DeSmith/Feikema, Brue/Vos, Rhoda/Sybesma)

March 21: Pastoral Groups 1,2,5 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, Schaap/Rowe)

March 28: Pastoral Groups 3,4,6 (DeSmith/Feikema, Brue/Vos, Rhoda/Sybesma)

Formation Sunday Evenings

Join us for our 5:00 PM gatherings this month! You can find more information about The Colossian Forum on page 6.

March 7: Exploring The Colossian Forum

March 14: Exploring The Colossian Forum

March 21: Exploring The Colossian Forum

March 28: Making Resurrection Gardens

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 21** for the April issue.

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/21-2/21/21) \$42,735	\$35,740	-\$6,995
Missions	(1/1/21-2/21/21) \$3,640	\$3,270	-\$370
Christian Education	(8/1/20-2/21/21) \$110,069	\$100,335	-\$9,734

Notes from the Deacons

At the February deacons meeting, I brought up a request to the deacons. One of our SAM committee members saw that the Maletoungou special fundraising goal for the Teacher's Garden has a ways to go yet before the end of the fiscal year on June 30 and asked if Covenant can help. The Christian Education Resource Center goal of \$30,000 had \$125 as of the January Newsletter.

The Maletoungous have been involved in building up a network of Christian Schools in West Africa and equipping teachers with resources and education. The Teacher's Garden has books and resources, but also organizes regular workshops and is a kind of community center for educators to give each other support in their work.

If you look back through the Maletoungous' newsletters in the eCoVenAnt emails and get

caught up, I think you'll see that the Teacher's Garden has been a great project for Sos and Kara to be involved with and there are many stories of how God is at work in their ministry.

The Deacons approved a special gift and we will finalize an amount in March. The SAM Committee has a special giving opportunity on the next fifth Sunday, but that will not be until May 31, so we didn't want to wait that long.

If necessary, some of the extra funds in May can supplement the budgeted Missions Fund, but if the missions fund giving stays steady, we will have another opportunity to come together in a special way on that fifth Sunday.

You can reach out to me if you see more needs that we can consider as a Service and Missions Committee as we get closer to May.

-Eric Rowe, SAM Committee Chair



Regarding issues on which we differ, Christ can disciple us on a path of peace. Regarding controversies on which we feel divided, Christ can make us more Christ-like. We can trust these truths because the inspired Apostle teaches that "in him [Christ] all things hold together." (Colossians

1:17) We can expect to grow together as the one body of Christ because, at this very moment, Jesus prays to our Father that we "may all be one." (John 17:21)

On Sunday evenings in March, we will explore gospel truths in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, and we will do so with insight provided by a ministry called "The Colossian Forum." (<https://colossianforum.org/>) The Colossian Forum offers resources that help followers of Jesus meet together in ways that build up rather than tear down the body of Christ. During these evening gatherings, Pastor Joel and other members of Covenant will explore truths from the biblical book of Colossians, The Colossian Forum ministry, and the gospel as a whole. Among the topics we will explore in a healthy way are human sexuality, politics, and divisions in general. Please consider participating.

-Pastor Joel

Serving at Covenant

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

After the Cookie Jar assembly team put the cookie jars together on January 31, another crew came to brave the elements to deliver them to the houses around church. Eric Rowe had made color-coded maps of the Covenant neighborhood—our parish, you could say.

As we were preparing to leave to distribute the cookie jars, Jeri Schelhaas remembered seeing an "it's a boy/es un nino" sign in the snow bank in front of the Hawleys' old house. So we thought, "Let's bring them a baby quilt too." And Rin Goedhart ran down and picked one out. Pastor Joel and Tricia were able to deliver it to the family and had a nice little conversation with them.

Rebecca De Vries, Jeri, and Eric traveled north of Covenant to 3rd Street NE and met a few of our neighbors there, and Rin and Chris hiked down 2nd Avenue and were able to talk for a bit with the McCarthys and a few others. Rin said it was nice to put faces to houses.



And if folks weren't home, we left the cookie jars by the front door. Joya Breems had made lovely cards that were attached to the jars. They included a brief note from Covenant, our contact info, worship times, and instructions for baking the cookies in English and Spanish.

Thank you to Joya and Eric and the rest of the SAM committee. And hopefully we can continue to find ways to connect with those in the neighborhood around us.





A Name Change...

We received this letter from from ReFrame Ministries (formerly Back to God Ministries International) and wanted to pass it along.

Dear Friends,
Because your congregation is a valuable ministry partner, I am writing to make sure that you have all the information you need about the recent change in our ministry's name and tagline: **ReFrame Ministries: God's Story. Today's Media.** This change was approved by the Christian Reformed Church's governing body in June 2020, and you will begin to see the new name and tagline on our publications.

I want to assure you that the name and tagline are all that is changing—not the ministry, not our values, not our core beliefs. Even our familiar logo with the cross in the blue globe will remain as a way of honoring our past while going forward. We know that this is God's ministry and we'll continue to use con-

temporary media to tell his timeless, biblical story.

Members of the CRC put hard work and relied on the Holy Spirit's leading as they developed this ministry, so I realize this may initially feel unsettling. But, our research has shown that the name ReFrame Ministries is more successful at connecting with new audiences—especially people who don't yet know Jesus. Many people in your church and across North America already know us as "ReFrame" because ReFrame Media has been the name of our English ministry since 2008.

Thank you for your church's partnership in this important work!

-Rev. Kurt Selles, Director

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to your church relations manager in the United States, Karla Soule. You can reach her at 616-682-4960 or ksoule@reframeministries.org.

Thank You!

Covenant Christian Reformed Church, thank you for the gift of \$125! A few months ago, in light of COVID, I was feeling the need to get out and see people again. We're doing that—carefully with masks—in immigrant-owned stores and on the streets with some service groups, individuals, or just a few people. If you feel that need also, let me know because we can do that together. May God bless your year 2021!

-Fred Wilgenburg
New Roots Ministry, Sioux Falls

