

Covenant Free Swap



**Saturday, May 1
9:00 AM—12:00 PM**

Bring all the treasures that you no longer need and take home a few treasures that you could use! Books, chairs, sports equipment, toys, and more. Whatever is left at noon will be packed up and donated!

Church Spring Cleaning



**Saturday, May 8
9:00 AM**

All hands on deck! It's time for a deep cleaning at church again! All ages can help and each pastoral group will be assigned a job or area of church to tackle. And added bonus—there are always some sweet treats to keep us motivated to finish the job! Join us!



We had a great time on the evening of Palm/Passion Sunday making resurrection gardens.

As we walked through Holy Week, hopefully these were a good way to wait and watch and hope for the promise of Christ's resurrection. There are a few more pictures of this event scattered throughout the Courier.

Courier

May 2021

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



This is from a recent newsletter from Benjamin and Tricia Groenewold Van Dyk, missionaries that Covenant supports as they serve as philosophy professors at LCC International University in Lithuania through Resonate Global Mission.

Lament = Grief + Trust

A year after we learned that LCC would move abruptly to remote learning due to the pandemic, we have been pondering the idea of lament. We see quite a bit of lament in the Bible, but often we don't know exactly what to do with it. When we are in times that feel like a desert, in hard times, in pain, or in grief, we tend to look to God to bring us out of it, or we look for blessings that counteract or balance the sorrows.

But we have been learning that lament is not about moving from the bad to the good, from suffering to blessing, from sadness to joy. Those are also part of the human story, but they are not the only part. In lament, we hold together the sadness and God's faithfulness. We offer our honest sorrow to God and we praise him for who he is. We hold out our pain in front of Jesus and proclaim our trust in him. They both happen at the same time.

When Peter wants to keep Jesus from death in Mark 8:31-35, Jesus rebukes him and says that Peter is only thinking of human concerns. In contrast, Jesus says, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." We carry our cross and we follow Jesus.

Hearing the news recently that the lockdown in Lithuania will extend for at least another

month was hard. We are eager to be back together with groups of students, with our church gathering, with friends, to be doing more fully what we feel we are called here to do. In this desert time of little interaction, when meaningful service seems to always be at a distance, we are learning to be honest about the grief we feel and at the same time to proclaim more boldly that we trust God's faithfulness and love.

Answers to Prayer:

Thank you for your prayers as we process a lot of big emotions in the anticipation of seeing family this summer for the first time in two years. Interestingly, the beginning of the release of the tight grip we've all been keeping on how we feel this past year has led to some unexpected good things, like Miriam opening up about some of the negative experiences from her first two years of school in Lithuania that she hadn't shared with us before. Peregrine has created a count-down calendar for when we go the U.S.; in the meantime, we seek to live fully and well here even under the ongoing restrictions and continuous regulation changes.

Prayer Requests:

Please pray for stamina for students and professors as we head into the busy last part of the semester and come to terms with the disappointing fact that the hoped-for return to in-person classes will not happen this year. Pray for the seniors as they finish and defend their theses in an unusually challenging setting and make plans for life after university in a context of great uncertainty.

Pray for wisdom for local and national governments as they respond to the ever-changing context; in particular, pray that decisions will be made for the sake of common good rather than reputation or power.

2,988 Bags Delivered!

Thanks to everyone who came out and hauled salt on April 10! We had beautiful weather that day, which was greatly appreciated by all the workers! And thank you to all of you who ordered salt, brought treats to keep us hydrated and happy, or prayed for safety for us out on the roads. We also want to thank Stacy Jasper at Water Werks for making the fundraiser possible and for always allowing us to use his shop as a home base. So if you see Stacy out and about in town just tell him "thanks!"

Overall this was a very successful first attempt at a joint fundraiser between Covenant and Bridge of Hope. In total we sold 2,988 bags of salt—and I would estimate at least half of those sales were to people who are not members of either church so there is good community support for this fundraiser and I anticipate doing it again next year. Together we made around \$8,108 for our Legacy plans which means that Covenant's share of the profits is about \$4,054. I think we can build on that next year!

Next year we also hope to have as many wonderful workers as we had this year! A big thanks to Mark Horstman, Steve Crull, Lee Mellema, Dane Hibma, and Duane Bajema for driving their trucks and trailers. And also to Nick Breems, who formulates all the delivery routes on his computer. I could name everyone who came out and made a big differ-



ence but that would take up too much space! But it was fun to have the Vos and Ploegstra and Breems families all working together to deliver salt—are there any sayings about families that haul salt together? And finally to quote Kris Vander Plaats, who did not ask to be quoted in this article, "It was kinda fun." ☺ So next year come and join the fun if you are able!

-Emily Kramer



May Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Julian Addink	15	Will Breems	28	Erik & Barb Hoekstra
3	Luanne Goslinga	17	Meghan Vos	29	Sam Janssen Steve & Pat Crull
4	Ale Castelan	18	John-Patrick McCarthy	30	Emily Eppinga
8	Eldon & Marcia Westra		Ethan & Donna Brue	31	Joan McCarthy
9	Lisa Christians Len Rhoda	19	Mark & Barb Tazelaar		
		20	Zoey Eggebeen		
11	John & Becky Stevenson	22	Rowan Haan Jean Maletoungou Bernie & Kathy DeWit		
12	Rob & Megan Haan	23	Kurt Vos		
14	Lisa Feikema Carol Oostra Daniel Tazelaar Tom Tazelaar	25	Mark & Lisa Christians		
		26	Lewis Clark		



Offering Schedule

- May 2**
AM General/Building Fund
- May 9**
AM Christian Education Fund
- May 16**
AM Missions Fund
- May 23**
AM World Renew
- May 30**
AM To be determined
- 4

Sunday School & Children's Worship

Offering for May



Boxed, bagged, and packaged products
(rice, potatoes, Hamburger Helper,
taco seasoning, etc.)

May Scheduling

May Worship Schedule

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!

April 25: Pastoral Groups 1,2,5 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, Schaap/Rowe)

May 2: Pastoral Groups 3,4,6 (DeSmith/Feikema, Brue/Vos, Rhoda/Sybesma)

May 9: Pastoral Groups 1,2,5 (Friend/Eggebeen, Ploegstra/Janssen, Schaap/Rowe)

May 16: Pastoral Groups 3,4,6 (DeSmith/Feikema, Brue/Vos, Rhoda/Sybesma)

May 23: Pentecost Sunday—all invited

May 30: All invited

Formation Sunday Evenings



Join us for our 6:00 PM gatherings this month! This month we will continue to offer Vespers services each Sunday evening. These services will use prayers and litanies from the *Book of Common Prayer* and give us space and time for thanksgiving and praise, silence and meditation on scripture. Services will last between 45 minutes and an hour and include a brief meditation from Pastor Joel.

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, **May 24** for the June issue.

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/21-4/18/21) \$85,470	\$83,691	-\$1,779
Missions	(1/1/21-4/18/21) \$7,280	\$7,594	+\$314
Christian Education	(8/1/20-4/18/21) \$139,420	\$134,436	-\$4,984

Notes from the Deacons

Changes to the SCCS Legacy Plan

The Legacy Plan (formerly known as “Fair Share”) for SCCS will be changing for this coming school year. For the last few years, the amount that the church paid in was based on a formula that included the number of current students and the historical number of students based on the last 20 years. For the 2020-2021 school year, Covenant paid in the equivalent of \$3865 per student. For the 2021-2022 school year, the amount will be determined by the individual churches. The churches are being asked what percent of the tuition they will pay for the students who attend their church. The limit is up to 36% of the total tuition per student. At this time we are

planning on contributing the full 36% or \$3420 per student. Each year the deacons will review and determine how much to contribute per student.

The biggest change for the upcoming school year is that this number will be directly deducted from the tuition amount for each student. The other existing deductions will remain to further reduce the tuition amount for each family (multi-student discount, Alternative Revenue discount). The amount remaining after all the deductions will be the responsibility of the parents. This means that those who attend a church that does not contribute as much will need to make up the difference in the tuition amount. If you have any questions, please contact me. Kurt Vos Christian Education plan treasurer.

-Kurt Vos



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Holly Morgan Halpert was born to Lisa and Morgan Halpert on April 15, weighing 7lbs 11 oz. Opa and Oma are Chris & Rin Goedhart.



Serving at Covenant

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

Update on Tesoros de Dios in Nicaragua

While Kathleen and I haven't been able to make it down to Nicaragua this last year due to the pandemic, much has still been happening there.

Throughout much of last year, Tesoros de Dios students could not attend school in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the staff was able to quickly pivot to doing home visits to provide therapy and instruction, as well as to deliver food and medicine to the families that needed that support. They also began providing online instruction using cell phones and Whatsapp. Kathleen was very involved in helping the staff develop programs and procedures for supporting students and families during this time.

In the fall, Hurricanes Eta and Iota made land fall on the Caribbean shore of Nicaragua and caused much chaos. Tesoros de Dios, with the

support of some local church communities, gathered food and other needed supplies and delivered them to some hard-hit communities on the other side of the country and also made some connections which have allowed them to begin supporting and improving the educational services for those with disabilities in those Caribbean communities.

Kathleen continues to meet online weekly with the staff to provide consultation on student diagnosis and programming, as well as to provide training for the staff. This summer, one of her goals is to update and expand the Spanish language special education training manual she created and to possibly set up an online course in Spanish to train more teachers in special education practices.

The "Transition to Life" program for young adults with disabilities continues to grow and money is still being raised to build a workshop area where skills such as wheel chair repair and furniture building can be housed and taught.

-Kathleen & Dwight VanTol



GEMS Update

What joy it was to see these girls and counselors gather twice a month to learn what it means to be One Another Friends. Our theme verse for the year was John 15:15: "I have

called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." We started our evenings in the GEMS Diner to focus on 5 One Anothers—Love One Another, Pray for One Another, Serve One Another, Accept One Another and Be Kind to One Another. Our Bible lessons were based around friendship stories found in the Bible. We concluded the year by enjoying a final night at the GEMS Diner enjoying games and snacks.

-Valerie Van Beek

Pictured counterclockwise from left: 4th grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade

