

Congratulations, Covenant Graduates!

We are so proud of all of our Covenant graduates! May God be with each of you as you begin the next phase of life, whether that be moving on to a new school or leaving school and beginning a new career!

8th Grade Graduates

Deirdre Eggebeen
Elia Eppinga
Everett Fedders
Annika Goslinga
Eli Horstman
Ezra Landman
Cambri Zonnefeld

Rock Valley Community High School

Jonathan Van Tol

Jon plans to continue working at Dordt after graduation.

Unity Christian High School

Joya Breems

Next year I plan to attend Dordt University and major in Communications.

Jasper Fedders

My plans for next year is to go down to Mcpherson, Kansas, a small little town that

doesn't have very many people, but it has a great college with a program specializing in Automotive Restoration. Down there they work on pre-1973 cars and automobiles. Its a great college and it's something that I am going to be trying out for a year. If I like it, I will continue on; if I don't then, I will get out and find a mechanic to work for or maybe start my own shop. At the moment these are my plans, but anything can change—that much is true.

Hannah Landman

I plan to attend Dordt University to major in Biology (and possible Chemistry), as well as participate in Dordt's chamber orchestra, choir, and theater program (and to keep attending Covenant).

Jocelyn Zonnefeld

This coming fall, I am planning on attending Dordt University, double majoring in Mathematics and either Chemistry or Biology. I will also be participating in Kuyper Honors Program and playing for the chamber orchestra.

Western Christian High School

Lucas Stiemsma

Lucas plans to attend Dordt this fall and he's currently undecided about his major, but he is considering studying religion or philosophy.

(Continued on page 7)

Courier

June 2020

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

A Note from the Elders

Dear Covenant sisters and brothers, the spring of the year of our Lord, 2020, has been one of the more observed changing-of-the-seasons in many years. Being at home, making less use of our cars, and spending more time outdoors has presented us with the opportunity to notice the subtle changes that we often miss when we are in a hurry to get somewhere. First of all came the busy, bustling robins; red breasts ruffled up against the raw winds of February and March. Then came a thickening of buds on the trees, wrapping a thin green haze around the skyward yearning limbs. Early spring bulbs poked their pointy green leaves tentatively above ground and then unfolded tightly folded flower petals—only to be covered in a downy layer of snow on Easter Sunday. Next, a benediction of warm, sunny days brought us outdoors to breathe in the spring air and soak up the sunshine, and then came more rain, greening the grass and bringing up bright yellow dandelions and dainty blue, purple, and cream violets. And for the last week or so—the intoxicating fragrance of lilacs in bloom. Ahhh!

Since we know that the tenderness and grandeur of the world around us speaks to us about the majesty and splendor of God, it may be that this changing-of-the-seasons has spoken more clearly than ever before. I hope we are listening and enjoying and blessing God more than ever.

As the seasons change, there are also signs of change in community life in our town, state, and country these past few weeks. Businesses are beginning to open, carefully, with many cautionary measures in place. People are talking and tentatively planning activities for this coming summer and autumn. The council

and a task force made up of members of Covenant are also looking ahead to the time when we will be able to worship together in the sanctuary and enjoy the sacrament of the Lord's Supper together. Until that time comes, we will continue to worship our God in spirit and truth via the livestreaming of our services. We are so grateful to our pastor, our worship coordinator and leaders, musicians and a technical crew who are working hard to make this possible!

Upcoming events in our church family are that newly chosen elders and deacons will be installed in the coming weeks and Dr. Justin Bailey will be ordained in our congregation as a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. God has blessed us richly in these leaders.

May God bless us and keep us, brothers and sisters, as we continue to grow in love for him and for each other in the months to come.

-Sanneke Kok

Note from Pastor Joel

As we continue to walk through the COVID crisis, we can find some illumination by bringing two thematic passages from Scripture into dialogue with one another. We can begin with (and then return to) what Ephesians 1 tells us about the mystery of God's will:

“With all wisdom and insight [God] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Eph. 1:8b-10)

Ultimately, God is at work to gather up all

(Continued on page 3)

Note from Pastor Joel

(Continued from page 2)

things in Christ—to put every creature into right relation with God in Christ. We can trust and partner with God for that purpose during the time of the virus and at all times. Does that mean we will avoid all hardship? Ponder the thematic verse from Jeremiah, in which the Lord commissions his prophet as follows:

“See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.” (Jer. 1:10)

Even in the new covenant era inaugurated by Christ, our Lord can still pull down in order to build up. In what ways do we experience both those actions? In what ways do we participate in them? As you ponder, remember that God’s final Word is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. God inspired the words in Jeremiah so that we, in hope and harmony with one another, can find perseverance and encouragement in Christ and “with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (See Romans 15:1-6)

-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.

Hey Everyone! Here is a volunteer opportunity for all of you this month! Mid-Sioux Opportunity, the local food bank in Sioux Center, is badly in need of non-perishable grocery items. They have seen an increase in families that needed food the last few months, and a decrease in donations from local churches. Covenant usually does the reverse offering thing in May, but it was put it off until June so that hopefully we can be meeting again to make it easier to collect.

We always have a good response to this project, but this year, because of the increased need, we are asking you to give generously and from the heart. We have neighbors that are food insecure and this is a direct way to help them. Any canned or boxed food item or paper products would be most welcome. If a check would be more convenient, make it payable to Mid-Sioux and put it in Kurt Vos or

Carol Oostra’s mailbox at church.

You can leave donations in the NE entrance of church. Let’s flood Mid-Sioux with bags of groceries as a way of showing our thankfulness to God for his care for us.

From the SAM Committee
-Carol Oostra



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Pam and Dennis De Jong welcomed a new little girl into their family! Eliza Alyce Van Dyken was born on May 11 to Andrea and Philip. She was 6 lbs, 8 oz. Big brothers, Gideon and Reuben, are excited to have her around!

Jake and Trena Van Wyk have two new grandchildren! Noa Adele Wanaselja was born May 6 to Allison and Tim in Philadelphia. Hendrik Isaiah Van Wyk was born May 19 to Eric and Andrea in LaCrosse, WI. We are so thankful for these healthy babies and look forward to seeing them when possible. God is good!

June Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Daryl & Deb Hibma Mark & Cheri Horstman	12	Lee & Jenni Mellema Les & Lila Sybesma	24	Alexa Castelan Tom & Ruth Clark Verne & Gidge Meyer
4	Davey Henreckson Sherri Ten Napel Dallas & Carol Apol	13	Joya Breems Terry & Jill Friend	25	Logan Hannigan Barb Tazelaar Bob & Rebecca DeSmith
5	Jo Faber Joe & Erin Eggebeen	14	Cal Jongsma	26	Rachel Landman Nick & Jenni Breems Laremy & Rebecca DeVries Rockne & Joan McCarthy
6	Corrie DeVries Naomi Ploegstra	16	Jake Van Wyk Marv & Mary Wielard	27	Steve Holtrop & Sharon Bouma Jim & Barb Schaap
7	June Brands	18	Dale & June Brands	28	Gaby Castelan Sally Jongsma Alyda Mellema
9	Jeri Schelhaas Adam & Robin Fedders Don & Sherri Ten Napel Marty & Kris Vander Plaats	19	Daryl Hibma	29	Ryan Hannigan
10	William Clark Sarah Hawley Mike & Megan Ribbens	21	Duane Bajema	30	Andy Landman Mary Wielard
11	Amira Ribbens Ross & Lisa Feikema	22	Donna Brue		
		23	Robin Fedders Isabella Hannigan Stan & Beth Vanden Berg		



Offering Schedule

June 7

AM General/Building Fund

June 14

AM Christian Education Fund

June 21

AM Missions Fund

June 28

AM Compassion/Tuition Assistance Fund

Formation Sunday Evenings

The last Sunday of Pastor Joel's Jeremiah study via Zoom will take place on May 31 at 5:00 PM. Pastor Joel will do some teaching via Zoom during the month of June.

May 31: Jeremiah 31-32

June 7: Teaching, Topic TBD

June 14: Teaching, Topic TBD

June 21: Teaching, Topic TBD

June 28: TBD

June Assignments

Here are the assignments for members to “practice hospitality” this month...
Remember to wear your name badges!

Nursery Scheduling

Because of the uncertainty of when we will resume meeting in our building, we will not be scheduling nursery volunteers for the month of June. We will put out a schedule before the nursery reopens.



Coffee Servers

Mark C, Cal J, Tricia K,
Andy L, Shirley M, Beth VB

Sunday Scheduling for June

With so much uncertainty regarding when we will worship together again in our building, we are leaving the same Sunday volunteers on the schedule for the month of June as well. If we begin worshiping together in June, we hope that you will be willing to finish out that month if needed.



Greeters

AM Jenni B, Robin F, Kurt V



Ushers

AM Chris G, Joan MC, Shaun S

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, **June 22** for the July issue.

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

Giving To Date

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/20-5/24/20) \$109,602	\$95,541	-\$14,061
Missions	(1/1/20-5/24/20) \$9,555	\$7,760	-\$1,795
Christian Education	(8/1/19-5/24/20) \$160,981	\$158,837	-\$2,144

Notes from the Deacons

Online Giving... What is it all about?



During these uncertain times there are always questions raised about different things and people are wary of new things that pop up during uncertain times. We are certainly in those times, but online giving is not one of those things to be wary of.

Covenant started using online giving at the end of March, with almost \$5,000 given via the online platform. The online giving platform that Covenant is using is called GivePlus, which is a VANCO Company and partners with Servant Keeper, our membership and giving tracking software. Giving for April was up 31% from March and up 28% from April 2019. Can this be attributed to online giving or are members simply giving more? Maybe? Either way, we are blessed by the giving of our congregation as we work to meet the needs of our budget.

What is involved in online giving? Why do it? Online giving is a simple way to ensure gifts are given to church for those desired locations you would like to give to. It is easy and simple. There are several ways to do online giving. One is via our website, second is via the mobile app, third is via Online Bill Pay through your bank, and fourth is via direct ACH transfer set up with our bank. All of these options are simple and easy to do.

Are there costs to you or to the church for online giving? Yes, there are costs to some of the online giving options that are available. It

is like purchasing something at your favorite restaurant or store with a credit or debit card—there are costs associated with that. The deacons felt it was necessary to provide these giving options so that our congregation has simple and easy ways to continue to give. When you give via the website or mobile app, you have an option to help offset the costs for the online giving portion, which helps cover roughly half of the transaction fees. As I mentioned, we received \$5,000 in giving during the month of April via GivePlus; the cost for this service for April was \$66.75. A minor cost for gifts received, but to help reduce these costs, simply select “Help Offset Fees.”

If you feel these costs are not warranted and you do not want to have those costs incurred, you can simply give via Online Banking with Bill Pay or setup an ACH transfer with our bank. These services are free to you and to Covenant. Online Bill Pay is simple to set up, you designate the amount and your bank writes a check to Covenant. ACH transfers take a little more work—your bank needs to talk to our bank, then designate the amount. If you have any questions about any of these ways to give at Covenant, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or one of the other deacons.

As deacons we are striving to provide simple, worry-free options for you to continue to give to Covenant during these uncertain times. We appreciate all of our members and their continued support for our ministries. Your support is evident during these last couple of months of online services, and we thank you for continuing to give so we can meet our monthly budget needs. God’s Got This!
#CovenantStrong

In His Love,
-Adam Fedders, Treasurer

Congratulations, Covenant Graduates!

(Continued from page 1)

Michael Vander Plaats

Next year I plan on attending Dordt University. I plan on studying either Business or Data Science, and I will also be running cross country and track.

Dordt University

Jaren Brue

I graduated with a degree in Engineering from Dordt University. My post-senior year plans are to go one more year at Dordt to finish with a minor in music. So technically I have not graduated with my complete degrees yet, but am 4/5 of the way there so pretty close!

Anna Christians

I majored in Theology with an emphasis in Biblical Studies and Missions and Ministry at Dordt University. I plan to move to Holland, Michigan in August and start classes in the fall at Western Theological Seminary in their M.Div program.

Tom Tazelaar

Tom graduated from Dordt with a History major with an emphasis in Museum studies and received minors in Business and Digital Media. Due to Covid-19, museums have been closed which is hampering his job search.

Northwestern College

Joey Horstman

Joey graduated from Northwestern College with a degree in accounting. He is currently living at home and studying for his CPA exams. In January, he will be moving to Denver to work at the accounting firm of Moss Adams.

Casey Sybesma

I just graduated from Northwestern College with a degree in Public Relations and began my job as a Marketing Specialist at Osceola Regional Healthcare Center in Sibley, Iowa last week. I am living in Sheldon. I anticipate getting married intimately in the mountains in July to Eric Schafer, a 5th grade teacher at Little Rock Elementary and a 2019 graduate of Northwestern College. We are members at American Reformed Church in Hull where he used to be a youth pastor.

A Prayer for Those Dealing with Postponed Events

Merciful and loving God,
whose name gives us grounding and presence,
we are living in unusual times, when we are
asked to remain apart from our sustaining
and nurturing community.

We are experiencing changes and loss of traditions with great meaning, milestones that mark the transitions in our lives- birthday parties, baptisms, graduations, weddings, funerals.

In this moment, we are unable to welcome our loving community of friends and family to add joy and celebration, or to help us grieve. God, bring us comfort as these events are canceled or rescheduled. Help our virtual gatherings offer connection May heartfelt expressions of loving care soothe our disappointment and sadness.

As many hopes are deferred, we offer our prayers in the name of Jesus whose resurrection gives us life and, in whose name, we are held close and dearly loved. Amen.

-Jacquie Reed

Reprinted from "Pandemic Prayerbook"

A Covenant Playlist

Someone shared a song on Facebook last week that I just loved. I listened to it three times in a row and couldn't get it out of my head. I found myself whistling it as I worked at the Fruited Plain, singing the chorus as I drove to Walmart, praying it as fears and anxious thoughts popped into my head. It was an earworm and a good one.

So I thought I'd see who else has songs they are humming or praying or listening to that give them comfort during these tough times. And even though they aren't all taken directly from scripture, the songs folks shared with me offer some really good news. I pray you'll find a good song here (or somewhere) to get stuck inside your head and that the Holy Spirit will bring it to mind when you need it.

(You can click on each link below or you can use this [Youtube playlist](#). Enjoy!)

- Dallas and Carol Apol: "[In Times Like These, I Have an Anchor](#)."
- Ross Feikema: "[After the Clouds Roll Away](#)" by the Consolers. If you follow Ross on Facebook, you'll find many more song suggestions from him.
- Deb and Daryl Hibma: "[Praise the Savior, Now and Ever](#)" LUYH 191, but especially Dale Grotenhuis's choral arrangement. You'll have to find your old Dordt College Concert Choir record to listen to that one.
- Joseph Bartels: "[We Are Not Overcome](#)" by Bifrost Arts. That's Joe singing his arrangement of it.
- Laremy De Vries: "[My Help, My God \(Psalm 42\)](#)" by Sandra McCracken. He says "I have really felt that longing to *lead* the throng instead of just being *watched* by the throng on a computer screen. I don't feel like many of the versions of Psalm 42 really get that sense of communal urgency, longing not just for God and not just for his house but to meet God in his house with his people, the throng, the multitude."
- Bernie DeWit has found [good news in Psalm 91](#). Here's a song based on [Psalm 91](#).
- Erin Eggebeen: "[Who Am I!](#)" by Casting Crowns, "[Never Been a Moment](#)" by Micah Tyler, and "[You Are My Vision](#)" by Rend Collective. Erin recommends you listen in that order. She says they put things in perspective and help her worship at the same time.
- Tricia Kok: "[We Will Feast](#)" by Sandra McCracken. "Along with a beautiful melody, the words are full of hope and promise from God." Amen to that.
- Kris Vander Plaats: "[Jesus, Draw Me Ever Nearer](#)" by Keith and Kristyn Getty.
- Rebecca De Vries: "[First Song of Isaiah \(Surely it is God Who Saves Me\)](#)" by Advent Birmingham. Remember this song from the *Sing! A New Creation hymnal*? Here's a delightful arrangement with ukulele.

-Rebecca DeVries

Prayers for Patience During COVID-19

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...

Patience, Lord, a state of emotional calm in the face of:

- Provocation
- Misfortune
- Calm without complaint or irritation

Patience, Lord? Many of us are living on the edge

- We have too much to do
- We have not enough to do
- Tears are just below the surface
- Tears are on the surface of our cheeks
- Our children don't understand what's going on
- We don't understand what's going on
- We can't reach out with a hug
- We can't imagine living much longer without a hug
- Too many of us are alone and lonely
- Too many of us need a quiet space in the cacophony of our homes

Patience, Lord, is far from us

- Show us, Lord, how the fruit of the Spirit becomes the fruit of our lives
- Be patient with us, Lord, on days when we display spoiled fruit
- Grant us, Lord, an extra measure of your Spirit in these difficult times

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, and faithfulness. May this fruit more and more become ours, and as it does, may it bring fruitful hope to the lives of those around us.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

-Larry Doornbos

Reprinted from The Network

The Banner Update

Dear CRC Church Member,

With so many of us staying at home and having extra time on our hands, *The Banner* would love to send you our weekly update. It's free and you can cancel at any time.

The Banner Update is a weekly email ([sample here](#)) sent on Mondays to anyone interested in getting the latest news from the Christian Reformed Church straight to their inbox. Once a week, we include links to news, features, online-extra content, Our Shared Ministries articles, and reviews of books, movies, and TV shows readers might be interested in. It gives a sneak-peek of all the new articles posted in the past week at www.thebanner.org.

Signing up is as easy as [clicking this link](#).

Thank you, and may God keep you all safe during this time.

-Shiao Chong

Editor, The Banner

Pulling Up Roots

Do you realize Covenant Church has lost something more than not having fellowship recently? It was about 45 feet tall, 192 inches around at the base, 174 inches around at the height of 5 feet, and has been on the property for 90 years or so. An insulator embedded in this living giant indicated that once it was used to connect electricity or phone lines to the house that many years ago was located north of our church building. Although no one involved in the decision-making process which resulted in the death and removal of this longtime community landmark desired this action, this tree needed to be removed since safety concerns dictated that it needed to come down. The Silver Maple tree to the northwest of our drive-through main entrance is, sadly, gone.

-Ron Oostra

