

SUNDAY, December 20, 2020

WORSHIP NOTES

Worship Services Online

Click [here](#) to find the livestream for our worship services on Facebook (or copy this link and paste it into your browser: <https://www.facebook.com/Covenant-CRC-520064914738965/>). Then click on the "Videos" section. It will say "live" next to it when we are live. Remember, the video will not show up until a few minutes before 10:00 AM. You can also choose to watch a recorded version of the service after it is over (please note that there may be some dead space at the beginning of the video before worship begins).

Worship on Sunday Morning

This Sunday, **December 20**, we gather in our building for worship with Pastoral Groups 2 (Ploegstra/Janssen), 4 (Brue/Vos), and 6 (Rhoda/Sybesma) welcome in the sanctuary and the rest worshipping online via Facebook Live. For those worshipping in the building, we **highly encourage you to wear a mask, especially if you plan to sing** (and take note of the message below from CHP). We also encourage you to move outdoors to socialize after the service if possible! Here is a link to the [mobile-friendly worship guide](#). Pastor Joel will be preaching from the gospel lectionary texts during this season of Advent. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper each Sunday during this season as well, so if you're at home, we encourage you to have your elements ready before worship.

Faith Formation Sunday Evening: Blue Christmas Worship Service

On Sunday, **December 20** we invite you to gather at 5:00 PM at church or virtually for a "Blue Christmas Service." This service will give us time and space to together acknowledge the sadness we may be feeling during the Christmas season. When the days are short and the nights are long, memories of past experiences and the pain of our present reality can become overwhelming for some. Through song, prayer, scripture, and meditation, we will bring our sadness and lament before God who comforts his people. We will together remember that, though we are walking in darkness, we have seen a great Light, and the darkness will not overcome the light. There will be a time in the service for you to prayerfully light a candle in memory, in honor, in gratitude, in hope, or in love, inviting the love of Christ to dispel our darkness. If you plan to attend the service via livestream, we encourage you to prepare a worship space for yourselves so that you may do the same. Here is a link to the [mobile-friendly worship guide](#). We will not gather next Sunday evening, **December 27**.

Christmas Day Worship Service

On Christmas Day, worship will begin at 10:00 AM. It will include singing, scripture, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Based on the congregation's response to our inquiry, we estimate attendance at about 100. We will adjust seating accordingly and practice distancing and masking protocols. We look forward to celebrating the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14).

New Year's Eve Worship

We have updated our plans for the New Year's Eve service. Instead of gathering together, we hope to provide an at-home New Year's Eve worship liturgy similar to what was provided on Thanksgiving Day. This is something you can work through on your own with your family or even with some others via Zoom. Look for more information next week.

Welcoming Guests to Covenant

While we are limiting in-building worship to three pastoral groups at this time, we wanted to remind you that you are still welcome to invite guests and those looking for a church home to visit Covenant on any Sunday.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Praying for Our Local Congregations

This week, please be in prayer for God's blessing on the Covenant CRC congregation and the ministry of Pastor Joel Kok.

A Message from Community Health Partners:

Community Health Partners, our local public health agency, recently sent us a message regarding masks:

Following Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation on November 10 regarding masking and indoor gatherings, the CEOs of the four Sioux County hospitals – along with Community Health Partners – are imploring all residents of Sioux County to help slow the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to gathering restrictions and mask requirements. "We as a hospital and health system community implore each resident and visitor in Sioux County to follow the Governor's proclamation requiring masking for indoor gatherings of 25 or more people," stated the health system leaders, adding "Specifically, we urge every church to strongly consider voluntarily submitting to this protocol as well." ... During this very challenging time, health care leaders and CHP ask the faith community to help preserve our healthcare resources and slow the community spread of COVID-19 by strongly considering wearing masks in church.

You can read the full message [here](#).

Early Bulletin Deadlines

Because of the holidays, please send all bulletin announcements to the office by Wednesday, **December 23 & 30** at noon.

Staff Out of the Office

Pastor Joel will also be taking some time off from December 26 to January 3, so please contact your pastoral group elder or deacon if you have any pastoral needs during this time. Rev. Liz Moss will preach on December 27 and Dr. David Westfall will preach on January 3. Rebecca and Sara also hope to take some time off over the holidays, so office hours may be a bit irregular.

January Courier

I'll be working on the next Courier this coming week. If you have something you'd like to include, email it to the office by Monday morning, **December 21!** (covenant@mtcnet.net)

Advent Devotional

We hope you have been blessed by the daily Advent devotions written by members of our congregation. You can find the devotions [online here](#), or a printed copy of the week's devotions will be available at church in the NE entrance. We trust that this project will help us stay awake to our Lord and in communion with one another.

Young Children and Worship Leaders Needed

Are you interested in helping grow the faith of our little ones at Covenant? We are currently looking for a few more leaders for our Young Children and Worship program, which we hope to restart in January. Please contact Cheri Horstman (mchorst@mtcnet.net) if you are interested or have questions about what serving in this way involves.

A Giving Opportunity:

In response to our community's need, we are collecting items for Mid-Sioux and the Hope Food Pantry. During the month of **December**, we are encouraging Covenant's members to donate cleaning supplies (dish soap, laundry detergent, cleansers, toilet bowl cleaner, etc.). You can bring them to church anytime during the month. Please place the items in the basket in the NE entry or in one of the baskets in church. Thank you for caring for our community!

Awareness Book Club

The Awareness Book Club will meet again in January, and we will discuss *Jesus and John Wayne*, by Kristin Kobes Du Mez. The dialogue is open to all members and your friends. We had a good discussion of *Unsettling Truths* by Mark Charles at our last session, and we expect another good dialogue in January. Even when we disagree with the author or one another, we learn from each other. The tentative date for the next session is Tuesday, **January 19**. If you have any questions, please get in touch with either Pastor Joel or Eric Rowe.

SCCS At Home Christmas Concert

Enjoy Sioux Center Christian School's At Home Christmas Concert from the comfort of your home! Our TK-8th grade music students recorded a vocal and instrumental concert that you may watch on YouTube. A link to the concert playlist is at www.siouxcenterchristian.com and will be available through **January 5**.

Give Joy This Advent with World Renew

World Renew's 2020-2021 Gift Catalog helps people, families, and communities experience more of the joy that God intends for them. Find a special gift that helps someone in need during the COVID-19 outbreak. Need a print catalog? There are a few copies on the welcome table or view the [online catalog](#). Call us at 800-552-7972 to find out more and give today!

Offerings for December

6	General/Building Fund	20	Missions Fund
13	Christian Education Fund	27	World Renew

Last week's offering	General Fund	\$2,565.00	Missions Fund	\$270.00
	Christian Education Fund	\$3,295.00	Building Fund	\$110.00

Online Giving

To give online, click [here](#) to access the online giving page. You can also continue to give by mailing a check to church, paying via online bill pay at your bank, or by ACH Bank Transfer. All checks will be used as needed unless designated. Contact your deacon with any questions.

Helpful Links:

- The Bulletin Announcements and a link to Sunday's bulletin and liturgy are posted [here](#).
- The Community Activities (Blue) Sheet is posted [here](#).
- Sermon recordings are posted [here](#).
- Mission & Ministry News: A newsletter from Cornerstone Prison Church can be read [here](#) and a newsletter from Mission India is [here](#). The latest update from Mike & Megan Ribbens is [here](#).

Encouraging our Missionaries

Got a minute? Send one of our missionaries a note of encouragement by email!

Kelly & April Crull
crulls@caimail.net

Gianni & Georgina Gracia
giannigracia@yahoo.com

Sos & Kara Maletoungou
smaletoungou@crcna.org

Mike & Megan Ribbens
mribbens@gmail.com

Ben & Tricia Groenewold Van Dyk
tvandyk@crncpartners.org

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



Happy Birthday this Week

Ruth Clark, Amelia Lappenga, Shirley Matheis, Betty Vander Plaats, Ken Matheis, Dennis Vander Plaats

Happy Anniversary this Week

Gianni & Georgina Gracia, Ryan & Val Zonnefeld

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Sunday 20th	10:00 AM 5:00 PM	Morning Worship: Pastoral Groups 2,4,6 present (and via Facebook Live) Formation Sunday Evening: Blue Christmas Worship Service (and via Facebook Live)
Monday	7:00 PM	Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday	6:30 AM	Men's Bakery Study Group (at Casey's Bakery)
Friday	10:00 AM	Christmas Day Worship Service (and via Facebook Live)
Sunday, 27th	10:00 AM	Morning Worship: Pastoral Groups 1,3,5 present (and via Facebook Live)