

WE Remember

Thank you to all who helped to plan and prepare for the WE service on March 20—Steve and Pat Crull, John and Linda Visser, Pastor Joel and Tricia Kok, Jill Friend, Rin Goedhart, Laurey Zwart, Ruth Clark, and the 7th and 8th grade students, and Duane and Jan Bajema and the rest of the Food Committee. It takes a lot of hands and we're grateful for them all!



And thank you to all who attended! It was good to worship and learn together again in the fellowship hall. You can check out the posters on the back wall to read stories of God acting in the lives of his people here! Make a cairn while you are at it.



And let's continue to practice the spiritual discipline of "remembering" at home! Check out these great ideas from Jill Friend; from songs, to Legos, to journaling, there is something for every age. www.smore.com/x9qmn

Also, SAVE THE DATE. We hope to hold our next WE service and meal on May 22.

-Rebecca DeVries



Afghan Settlement Update

Nine agencies are working with the U.S. State Department to re-settle Afghans. Covenant's agency of choice is Samaritan's Purse. Here is our latest report from them dated March 11.

"As of Tuesday, March 8, 2,000 Afghans arrived in the U.S. They will be staying in a conference center while they do cultural orientation and fill out paperwork. In about 3-4 weeks the state department will start approving applications and assuring cases to various resettlement agencies. So, there is potential for you all to be approved and sponsoring a family within a month."

These 2,000 refugees are distributed through the nine agencies mentioned above. We were encouraged that while we may not be approved in this round, "...the US will be continuing to welcome Afghans every week for the foreseeable future."

We had the great pleasure of visiting with Joel Gonzalez before the morning service on March 13. Joel immigrated from Central America to Sioux Center when he was in grade school. Speaking from first-hand experience, Joel helped us understand what it is like to be a refugee in a new, strange place.

A member of the National Guard, Joel volunteered to work at an Afghan Settlement Center on a military base in New Jersey. His intention was to be there a month, but his heart convinced him to stay six months. Joel helped relieve some of our tension by reminding us that while we want to be as courteous and culturally appropriate as possible, the refugees are hoping to do the same. Mistakes will be made on both sides, but friendships are formed in the middle.

It was a special moment for me to be in a room of white Protestants, hanging on every word of a Hispanic Catholic who was preparing us to host an Afghan family.

-Verlyn DeWit



The Covenant congregation truly does care. You donated everything... a vacuum, kitchen goods, towels, desk supplies and bedroom furniture. You scrubbed and cleaned and installed and lifted and moved. The house that we hope will soon be home to an Afghan refugee family is ready, and it has been prayed over and blessed. Thank you to all who helped in any way!

-The Housing Committee



Note from the Pastor

God willing, I will attend a “Healing Hearts; Transforming Nations” workshop from April 24 through April 28.

From an earlier Courier report, you may recall that I planned to attend such a workshop back in January. That workshop got postponed because of the omicron variant breakout, so I thank God for the rescheduling, and I thank Covenant for supporting me in attending this workshop.

Healing Hearts; Transforming Nations is a ministry of healing and reconciliation that originated in Rwanda a few years after their genocidal conflict in 1994. Our fellow Christians in Rwanda grieved over what they had done to one another, and they also experienced healing together through the power of the Holy Spirit. As they experienced a healing that empowered them for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, they also felt led by the Spirit to share their gifts with other Christians around the world. The workshop that I will attend will take place in Southern California. I look forward to reporting about it when I return in early May.

I can add that in Covenant’s 25th anniversary book called *Covenant: Its First Quarter Century*, I encountered the following sentence: “Covenant preferred healing to debating, even though the congregation has always had an ample supply of persons capable of debating.” (p. 38) During my three-plus years of pastoral work here at Covenant, I have witnessed that healing power. And I also hope, by God’s grace and Spirit, that we can build on it as we approach our fiftieth anniversary

as a congregation (in 2023-24). As several of us have experienced in “The Colossian Forum” ministry, differences in our views need not lead to divisions; instead, they can offer ways for us to deepen our discipleship. We can both debate issues and experience healing together. We can both argue with one another and accept one another, as Christ accepted us, for the glory of God (cf. Romans 15:7).

-Pastor Joel

Welcome, Lincoln!

Lincoln Fay Rylaarsdam was born on March 7. He is a happy and healthy little guy. His sisters are adjusting well to having a new baby in the house, and mom and dad are adjusting to being outnumbered.

Thank you so much to the many Covenant members who have reached out with meals, clothes, gifts for the girls, and prayers. We really appreciate your support!

-The Rylaarsdams



April Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Auden Mellema Marty Vander Plaats	15	Justin Bailey	29	Sarah Stiemsma
2	Brian & Barb Mellema	17	April Crull Eli Horstman Dylan Kramer Rose Postma	30	Jacob Van Tol
3	Rebecca DeVries				
6	John Visser	20	Jackson Visscher		
7	Megan Haan	21	Ruben Crull Nathan Maletougou		
8	Sam Eppinga	22	Stella Ribbens		
9	Sharon Dykhuizen Benjamin Westfall	25	Eden Hawley		
11	Sara Eppinga	26	Alejandro Castelan		



Forty Days of Prayer

Keep an eye out in April for an invitation to join in a CRCNA prayer initiative beginning May 1 and continuing through June 9. The denomination is inviting all to join together in forty days of prayer leading up to Synod 2022 which will take place June 10-16.



Maundy Thursday Service

April 14 | 7:00 PM

Service of worship and communion

Dr. David Westfall preaching

Good Friday Service

April 15 | 12:00 PM

Service of Song, Scripture, and Meditation

Easter Sunday

April 17 | 10:00 AM

Easter Morning worship with communion
We will close the service with "The Hallelujah Chorus." All who wish to participate are welcome to join the choir that morning.

Pastoral Group Dinner Schedule



March 27—Van Wyk/Janssen

April 3—Schelhaas/Feikema

April 10—Schaap/Rowe*

April 24—Bajema/Clark*

May 1—Rhoda/Sybesma

(*Please note the change in schedule from what was printed previously!)

April Scheduling



Coffee Servers

Cheri H, Sanneke K, Shirley M,
Jake VW



Greeters

Jan B, Alejandro C, Sally J



Ushers

Bob DS, Kathy DW, Tim K

Substitutes

If you are unable to serve on your assigned date for coffee, usher, or greeter, contact:

Dan A, Jenni B, Doug DB,
Joan MC, Gidge M, Marty VP



Thanks for serving!

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, **April 18** for the May issue.



Nursery

April 3

AM Channon & Joni V, Ethan & Donna B

April 10

AM Shaun & Sarah S, Laura J

April 14—Maundy Thursday

PM Ron & Carol O, Marty & Kris VP

April 17

AM Ryan & Val Z, Jo F

April 24

AM Jason & Sara H

May 1

AM Luke & Sarah H, Dave & Jeri S

Formation Sunday Evenings

Join us for our 6:00 PM gatherings this month:

April 3: Vespers

April 10: Vespers

April 17: No evening gathering

April 24: Northwestern College Drama Ministries: "The Road to Emmaus"

Notes from the Deacons

The deacons wanted to give you an update on some actions related to support for the people of Ukraine during this time. In deciding how best to support them monetarily, we built on a recommendation from the Service and Missions (SAM) committee and suggestions from our missionaries, the Groenewold Van Dyks who are currently in Lithuania teaching many students from both Russia and Ukraine.

At the March deacons meeting, we passed a motion to give \$1,000 each from the Compassion Fund to the three organizations mentioned in the Groenewold Van Dyk's prayer letter:

- Lithuanian Christian College Ukraine Emergency Fund
- Red Cross Ukraine
- United Help Ukraine

Please read the full prayer letter from the Groenewold Van Dyks if you haven't already and continue to pray for the specific requests they mention as well as in general for humanitarian relief and the end of this conflict. You can find it here:

<https://mailchi.mp/472871d07e93/lcc-and-ukraine-follow-up-and-specific-prayer-requests>

We also plan to add a line to our Spring Offering of Thanks envelopes to provide another avenue for Covenant members to give to help the people of Ukraine. This line will be tagged "Ukrainian Relief" and will be divided evenly between the 3 organizations listed above.

We encourage you all to continue to pray and to also talk to your deacon or SAM committee members if you have other Mission or Compassion Fund needs or ideas. We make decisions based off the concerns of our congregation and the needs that we are connected to, so we are glad to hear your recommendations.

-Eric Rowe



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the auction in February! We were able to raise \$15,695 to put towards our Christian Education commitments! And thanks to Lee Mellema, Mark Christians, and Tom Clark for keeping us entertained!

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/21-3/20/22) 72,888	\$73,870	+\$982
Christian Education	(8/1/21-3/20/22) \$105,613	\$122,980	+\$17,368

Serving at Covenant

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

I'm greeted at the door by my English student. "Namaste," I say as I bring my palms together and give him a slight bow. Meet Patel grins, and humoring me, greets me in a similar manner. "Namaste" means "hello" in Hindi and is a traditional way of greeting in his home country of India. Meet has recently relocated to Sioux Center for his first job after finishing graduate school, and wants a better handle on the English language. This is where I come in.

I have been involved with a local organization called PIECE (Partners in Education, Community outreach, and Embracing diversity) for several years, having tutored three students, two from Mexico and now one from India. PIECE offers free language courses to community members; although most of the students are immigrants and speak Spanish as their native language, there are those that speak other languages as their native tongue, such as Mam, Mandarin, and in Meet's case, Hindi and Gujarati.

PIECE was started by the Bethel CRC Mission and Evangelism Outreach Committee in September, 2013. The mission of PIECE as stated in their literature is as follows: "PIECE is a non-profit organization geared toward building, reconciling, and empowering partnerships through collaborative work, cross-cultural relationships, educational experiences, and community living for people in Sioux County, Iowa. One of our efforts is partnering with local organizations to offer unique opportunities for cross-cultural relationships to flourish.

Our vision is to prompt a community of hope and belonging."

Adult English Language lessons are offered on a weekly basis with volunteers meeting with students to provide English instruction for an hour. Materials and resources are provided, and bi-monthly meetings are offered to support and equip tutors. No previous training or experience is needed, and it isn't necessary to speak another language to participate (although knowing English would be nice).

Currently there are eighteen volunteers in Orange City and twelve in Sioux Center. There is always a need for more volunteers, so if you're interested, you can contact Martha Draayer or Ruth Mahaffy at sc.PIECE@gmail.com. Or you can talk to me as well. By that time I may even be able to teach you how to say "good-bye" in Hindi.

-Terry Friend



Our fabulous Christian Ed auctioneer team.

Summary of Classis lakota Meeting

Covenant is a member of Classis lakota which is one of 37 classes in the U.S. (11 are in Canada) which function as a "middle management governing tool" of the Christian Reformed Church in North America representing both the denomination as a whole and individual churches of a particular region. Classis lakota met on Tuesday, March 1 at Inspiration Hills with Bridge of Hope serving as the host church.

Classis convened at 9:00 AM with opening devotions led by Trudy Ash, Jill Friend, and Syd Hielema representing Faith Formation Ministries. After devotions, we started the agenda by conducting an examination for licensure to exhort (be given license to preach in Classis lakota and Classis Heartland) of Trevor Mouw and Thomas Soodsma. Trevor teaches at Unity and Thomas teaches at Western. Both reside in Sioux Center and are members of the Faith CRC. Their examinations were wonderful and were approved with gratitude. Their approval provides two more individuals who can serve in the ministry of the Word in an official capacity in the classes.

We discussed overtures (request for action addressed to Synod) and communications (information to Synod). Various committees of classis gave reports on their work. Delegates from Classis lakota to 2022 Synod were selected, and various committee selections were made for each of the classical committees.

A treasurer's report provided information about income and expenditures. Each church in the classis has a budget request of \$105.57 per church member. In the case of Covenant, we provided \$22,207 for the support of classi-

cal activities which was 108.43% of suggested classical ministry shares.

We were reminded that the classis has a website classisiakota.org that contains information about the work of classis. For example, a person can see the breakdown of the activities of how classis uses the funds at www.classisiakota.org/files/ugd/09ba077133802987f5439e9673e27b3eee767b.pdf

Classis adjourned mid-afternoon. Classis will meet this fall on September 20 at First CRC in Rock Valley.

-Duane Bajema

Salt Sale 2022

By the time you read this article, we will have finished collecting all of the softener salt orders for this year and we will be busy preparing to deliver all of those bags of salt! Hopefully we will have sold more than our total from last year, which was 2,988 bags! Once again we are working with Bridge of Hope on this fundraiser. Last year our total profit was \$8,108-so each church was able to raise about \$4,054 to go towards our Christian Education commitments. Let's see what this year brings! Please keep your eyes open for a link to sign up to help deliver salt on Saturday, April 23. We welcome anyone who is able to lift a 40lb bag of salt!

*-Emily Kramer
and the Christian Ed Committee*