

# Sunday School 2022

If you were a fly on the wall (or a wasp seems to be the more common insect found) in our church basement at 9 am on Sunday morning, you'd see a large collection of kids sharing hymn books with the kid next to them, an eager face offering a dollar bill to give to Sack Pack Program, a 5th or 6th grader stacking chairs before walking to their classrooms, while a collection of 3rd and 4th graders help with hymn books. It's a glimpse of the first ten minutes of group singing (often songs

which will be sung upstairs during worship) and sharing before children separate into the three classrooms and engage with the lesson, read Scripture, and learn from caring teacher volunteers within our church body.

These small actions form a community. And every week, I find myself appreciating the energy, love, and care that these children show to one another, as they get to know an older or younger kid at our church, as a collection of kids play foosball before the singing begins, as they ask questions, share about their week, or simply share a smile. I'm grateful for our church community. I'm grateful for the love I see for our children at Covenant both in worship and through our Sunday School program. What a joy to see God at work in their lives through their love and excitement. It's a pretty special place.

As I transition out of this role as Sunday School Coordinator and welcome in Megan Haan (in January), it's been special to see the many facets of the learning and working Body of Christ.

Our Sunday School offerings are supporting the Sack Pack program this year. We learned from Mrs. DeSmith on September 18 about this ministry for kids in our community. A

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*Courier*

*November 2022*

**COVENANT**  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

## Sunday School 2022

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group of over 25 of us enjoyed packing at the HOME building on Tuesday evening, Oct. 18. We had a lot of fun! Children in Worship and Sunday School kids have already raised \$150 towards our goal of \$375.

*-Ruth Clark*



# Tesoros de Dios Update

Dear Covenant Friends and fellow Tesoros de Dios supporters,

Thank you for your past support for Tesoros de Dios. I would like to share with you a little bit about the prayer needs of Tesoros de Dios. I'm including a letter update for those who'd like the latest full story, but in summary, this past month has indeed continued to be a rollercoaster ride that involved the unexpected closure of our organization's Nicaraguan bank account, a complete "laying off" of our 38 staff members (this was probably one of the hardest days of my time on the board), and now the slow rebuilding to where we are today. It has been a hard month, yet we can celebrate so many positive developments as we see God's perfect and sovereign plan unfold before our eyes.

The events of this month have forced Tesoros de Dios to reduce operations, and in order to

rehire more staff and reopen completely, we need two things:

- a) a bank account (Please pray! This might even happen next week!)
- b) funds to replenish this bank account! (We had to use a significant amount of money to pay staff severance payments, money that had been designated to pay salaries for the next few months.)

After reading the letter (found here: [covenantcrc.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Rebuilding-Together.pdf](https://covenantcrc.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Rebuilding-Together.pdf)), if you feel so inclined to give directly to Tesoros de Dios as part of our "Rebuilding Together" campaign, you can [click here](#) to donate online. If you would like further information, please contact me and I would be happy to try to explain the situation further

Thank you for your prayers, concern, and support of the ministry of Tesoros de Dios in Nicaragua!

*-Kathleen Van Tol*



**Grandma Alert!**  
**Grandpa Alert!**

Rylan Kennady Rhoda, 8lbs 8oz, was born September 16 to Brady and Emily Rhoda who live in Aguana, CA. She is great-grandchild #8 for Len and Lee Rhoda and the first granddaughter for Scott and Becky. Her big brother Beau is smitten.

*-Len & Lee Rhoda*



# November Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Jan Bajema Clark Stiemsma	15	Teo Crull	26	Georgina Gracia David Taylor
3	Natalie Brummel Benjamin Hummel Mary Ploegstra	16	Mia Mercado Castelan Lauren Vander Plaats Joni Visscher	27	Tim Kamp Ryan Zonnefeld
5	Vaughn Donahue Rue Mellema Ben Van Schouwen	18	James Rylaarsdam	28	Neil Collins McCarthy Doug & Marge DeBoer Channon & Joni Visscher
8	Rebecca DeSmith Kristi Hummel	20	Verne Meyer Courtney Rylaarsdam Duane & Jan Bajema Paul & Ruth Clousing	29	Laremy DeVries Claire Hummel Hannah Landman
10	Anna Westfall	21	Cambri Zonnefeld Alejandro & Isabel Castelan	30	Esteban Gracia Jocelyn Zonnefeld Ed & Mary Dengler
11	Verlyn De Wit	23	Bob DeSmith Sadie Landman		
13	Sophie Visscher	24	Louisa DeVries Titus Westfall		
14	Sharon Bouma Mark Christians Nancy Vanden Bosch				



## Pastoral Group Dinner Schedule



November 6—Stiemsma/Clark  
November 13—DeWit/DeJong  
November 20—Rhoda/Sybesma

Wondering which Pastoral Group you're in?  
The Pastoral Group lists  
are on our website:

[covenantcrc.net/wp-content/  
uploads/2022/09/22-23-Pastoral-Groups.pdf](https://covenantcrc.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/22-23-Pastoral-Groups.pdf)

## Thanksgiving Service

A TIME TO WORSHIP AND GIVE THANKS

NOVEMBER 24 / 10:00 AM

# November Scheduling



## Greeters

Sharon D, Marcy H, Jake VW



## Nursery



## Ushers

Daryl H, Sally J, Carol O



## Coffee Servers

Jo A, Bob DS, Kristi H, Beth VB

## Substitutes

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

Donna B, Pam DJ, Sarah Hawley,  
Tricia K, Dave S, Sharon V

**\*\*\*Do you consider yourself a snowbird?\*\*\***  
Are you planning on taking off for a month or two or for most of the winter? Please notify the office with the dates you'll be gone and I will avoid scheduling you during that time!

## 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, **November 21** for the December issue.

## November 6

AM Kurt & Sharon V. Lee R

## November 13

AM Ryan & Angela H, Marcy H

## November 20

AM Nick & Jenni B, Steve & Pat C

## November 24—Thanksgiving Day

AM Dave & Emily K, Doug & Marge DB

## November 27

AM Jeremy & Kristi H, Duane & Jan B

## December 4

AM James & Courtney R, Andy & Rachel L

## Formation Sunday Evenings

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

November 6: Vespers

November 13: Vespers

November 20: Vespers

November 27: No evening gathering

# SAM Updates

## Heads Up:

This Christmas, rather than Pastoral Group gift baskets for Mid-Sioux, the SAM (Service And Missions) Committee is putting up an Angel Tree in the fellowship hall. You will be able to take from the tree one or more tags which indicate individuals connected to Mid-Sioux who would appreciate a Christmas gift. Details later.

## Update:

After their years of service in Spain, Kelly and April Crull and family are adjusting to life in the States. By the end of the year, April will finish their work with Communitas International from home and with one more trip to Spain, after which she hopes to begin work in Des Moines in refugee resettlement. Kelly has now finished requirements to start substitute teaching as well as continuing his book writing projects. Alleke and Teo are attending Des Moines Christian School and little Ruben attends a kindergarten five minutes from their house. Our congregation was able to give them a one-time financial gift to help in their relocation and will continue for several months with support through our budget.

## Catching Up:

This summer and fall we had three wonderful

visits from our in-field missionaries, the Groenewold-Van Dyks, Megan Ribbens, and the Maletougous. Most recently Sos and Kara Maletougou and their four sons joined us for a Sunday evening gathering in which they reacquainted us with their work in West Africa in supporting and training teachers in Christian schools. We were enthused by their commitment to helping teachers educate from a Calvinist world and life view. This school year Sos and Kara and sons Jean, Nathanael, Isaac,

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## Notes from the Deacons

### Christian Education Update

We are supporting 59 students within our church family who are attending local Christian schools through Fair Share/Legacy funds. Additionally, we are partnering with three other churches to support Christian schooling for the Maletougous' children this year. We are meeting our monthly commitments with \$52,035 paid (at the time of writing this) toward our \$190,305 commitment for this school year. Thanks for your monetary gifts, whether through fundraisers, online, or weekly tithing. If you have questions, please contact a deacon.

*-Ruth Clark*

## Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/22-10/23/22) \$261,183	\$251,558	-\$9,625
Christian Education	(8/1/22-10/23/22) \$43,917	\$53,603	+\$9,686

# *Serving at Covenant*

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

How do we fill our retirement days with worthwhile activities? One of the answers to this question for us was to agree to spend time at the local hospital—Len as a greeter and Lee at the gift shop.

Welcoming people as they come in the front doors and helping them navigate the procedures involved in receiving care are the core of Len’s responsibilities. He enjoys the relationships he has developed with the doctors and staff and the opportunities to support them. Patient support is also critical, whether it means offering a wheelchair, opening a car door, or just chatting about the weather and common interests.

Lee can be found behind the counter at the gift shop most Thursday mornings, and she also appreciates the chance to visit with the folks who stop by. While hospital personnel make up the customer base, it is fun to get reacquainted with a former student or strike up a conversation with a visitor from out of town who stops by. Many customers claim the coffee is excellent, and what a plus—it is offered free of charge! There are also delicious bars available and a wide selection of quality merchandise.

Two possible negatives: Len manages to add peanut M&M’s to his diet on “work days,” and Lee often buys gift shop items which cost more than her “salary.”

Maybe you can tell that we really enjoy our volunteer time at the hospital.

*-Len & Lee Rhoda*



## SAM Updates

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and Samuel are living in Orange City and are eager to visit more with members of our congregation.

After recent recovery from serious health issues, Megan Ribbens was able to visit from South Africa and share about their work with us in a Sunday morning service. Megan has recently accepted a position within the Resonate Global Mission ministry carried out by her husband, Mike, Communal Listening and Discernment in South Africa. Megan is now the Family Life Coordinator, carrying out family ministries and expanding the work of Through Their Eyes, therapeutic photography programming for families. According to their newsletter, that new position means they will need to raise \$33,000 more in support.

Earlier this summer, Tricia and Benjamin Groenewold-Van Dyk and their children Miri-

am and Peregrine visited Covenant and shared about their work as professors at Lithuania Christian International University, teaching and mentoring students to live fully for Christ in all areas of life and work. The war in Ukraine has had a big effect on their students, some Russian, some Ukrainian, others from other Eastern European countries. Tricia and Benjamin's teaching, their presence in their classrooms and in their home, and their spirit-led wisdom have been necessary in such a time as this.

All three families are bringing the gospel of peace in areas of war, strife, poverty, and cultural turmoil. The SAM Committee urges you to read the letters sent out by these missionary families. They are inspiring and will guide your prayers for them as well as elicit more contact and support.

*-Jeri Schelhaas*



What a delight to celebrate new life at Covenant! The baby shower for baby Isaac in October was a wonderful time of fellowship—with a good dose of baby snuggles.