

They Escaped!

We had a great time hosting several church members (and their family, friends, and students!) at the Escape Room this past weekend! A total of \$2,045 was raised for the Christian Education Fund. Thank you to everyone who participated! Bragging rights for the best time goes to the group pictured to the right.





The Covenant CRC/Bridge of Hope joint Water Softener Salt Sale Fundraiser will be coming back again this spring! More information to follow but mark April 15 on your calendars as our delivery day! It is the same day as the TrailRaiser event at SCCS, but we hope to start early and be finished delivering salt by noon. We will need all hands on deck again this year to deliver salt! Watch for order forms in February.

PLIA

Annika is one of our regularly attending Dordt students and she wanted to pass along this opportunity to the Covenant family.

I get to serve as one of the PLIA Co-Chairs at Dordt University. We are very excited for our upcoming 2023 trips to 12 different sites, where we will hopefully be sending out over 150 students to serve! Below is a description of PLIA and how we serve various communities:

Every year many Dordt students use their spring break to further the Kingdom of God by serving in various locations in the United States. Every service group is made of 7-10 students varying in age. At the site, groups work alongside ministries and nonprofits to support, encourage, and learn. Common jobs that groups carry out include general maintenance, assisting in building homes, landscaping and agriculture, homeless ministry, Evangelism, prayer, and tutoring children.

Both students and ministries benefit from the opportunities PLIA provides. In addition to general help that is needed by the ministries, those involved see young, committed Christians living out their faith. Students benefit by experiencing new cultures and ways of life, gaining fresh knowledge about

social issues, acquiring new skills and knowledge, and having an opportunity to put their faith into action.

We want this trip to be accessible for all students, so instead of requiring them to pay the full cost, we try to cover the expenses through various fundraising efforts. Would you be interested in praying for and possibly donating to PLIA? We greatly appreciate any kind of support you are able to offer.

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. (nnkryndrs19@dordt.edu)

Thank you,
Annika Rynders

**ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE**

FEBRUARY 22, 2023
6:30-7:00 PM

Service of Worship with the
Imposition of Ashes



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

thrilled, as are Grandpa Darren and Grandma Dawn Huizenga. Great-grandparents, Len and Lee Rhoda, look forward to meeting Palmer when they next go to Carlisle, IA. We are so thankful!

-Len & Lee Rhoda



Our 6th grandchild was born on December 5. He is the son of our daughter, Lisa and her husband Morgan. Our grandson's name is Hugh Kees Halpert. He was welcomed home by his 3 sis-

Zion Gabriel Gomes arrived three weeks early on January 17. The doctors said his early (induced and eventual C-Section) arrival was because of signs of pre-eclampsia in Carlye, but Grandma thinks he just couldn't wait any longer to meet her. He weighted 6 lbs, 4 oz and was 20" long. We praise God for his safe arrival and ask for prayers for Carlye and Ariel as they begin this new chapter in their lives. Uncle Daniel is pretty thrilled too!

ters, Annie (5), Betsie (3), and Holly (1). Opa and Oma Goedhart think Hugh is just fine!!!

-Mark & Barb Tazelaar

-Chris & Rin Goedhart

With gratitude, shrieks, and hugs, Covenant members Grandpa Dave and Grandma Jeri Schelhaas, Aunt Becca and Uncle Laremy De Vries, and Cousins Corrie, Nico, and Louisa De Vries welcome a baby girl, Lumi Rose Schelhaas Niebruegge, born January 21 to Luke Schelhaas and Mia Niebruegge. She was six and a half pounds, 21 inches, and we can't wait to meet this precious addition to the family in February.

-Dave & Jeri Schelhaas



Our grandson, Cody, and his wife, Shelley, welcomed a third daughter to their family in the early morning hours of the last day of 2022. Sisters Harper (5) and Lyla (2) are

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Phil Postma	14	Marilyn Mouw	27	Marcy Holwerda
2	Deirdre Eggebeen	15	Sanneke Kok	28	Lila Janssen
3	William Lappinga Micah Moss	17	Jim Schaap Josh Van Schouwen	29	Sarah Moss
7	Wil Alberda	18	Joe Eggebeen Ryan Smit		
9	Jane Taylor	19	Dennis DeJong		
12	Robbin Eppinga Les Sybesma	24	June DeWit		
13	Dale Brands Mimi Kamp	26	Dan Altena Sandi Altena Ross Feikema		



In these cold, dark days of winter, Covenant was a place full of good food, fellowship, and conversation between members of Covenant and Good Shepherd who gathered in January for the Breaking Bread event. Thanks to all who organized and participated in this gathering!

February Scheduling



Greeters

Erin E, Andy L, John Z



Ushers

Lee M, Jeff T, Linda V



Coffee Servers

Isabel C, Mary D, Cheri H,
Sanneke K, Linda VH

Substitutes

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

Jenni B, Mark C, Pat C,
Jason H, Ron O, Channon 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, **February 20** for the March issue.



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Sharon V

February 5

AM Ryan & Val Z, Dennis & Pam DJ

February 12

AM Joe & Erin E, Kathy DW

February 19

AM Jason & Dani W, Tom & Ruth C

February 26

AM Jeff & Sara P, Jake & Trena VW

March 5

AM Lee & Jenni M, Chris & Rin G

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

February 5: Vespers

February 12: Vespers

February 19: Vespers

February 26: Vespers with Communion

Notes from the Deacons

Dear Covenanters:

The month of December capped off a good financial year for Covenant, thanks to you! Collections bounced back to \$29,385.53 in December, well above the \$22,656.77 in November and the average of \$26,320 per month required to meet the 2022 budget. December collections were strong enough to more than cover the end-of-year expenses, so the General Fund balance improved during the month to \$43,257.44, an amount approximately \$11,000 above its level on December 31, 2021. This is about 1.6 times our 2023 average budgeted monthly expenditures, so it should allow the deacons to pay bills on time and deal with the occasional unexpected expenditure.

For the 2022 year, our collections were \$9,125.58 below budget, but, because expenditures were \$18,803.40 below budget, we more than “balanced” our receipts and expenditures. Although good stewardship was seen (and very much appreciated) in many the church expenditure accounts, nearly half of the savings was associated with the “Premises” category, with nearly half of this amount attributable to reduced custodial expenses (as noted at the congregational meeting).

The “Old Missions Fund balance” is now at \$6,148.74. Since the deacons prefer to fully fund our missionaries through the General Fund budget, this money can be made available for new ways of reaching out with the good news, so if you have an idea along these lines feel free to share it with us.

The 2022 ending Compassion Fund balance was \$9,834.47, which, as noted at the Congregational Meeting, was down substantially from its level a year earlier. The deacons are talking about ideas for replenishing the fund in 2023 and are gratified to already see some increased Compassion Fund giving, just from the increased communication about the need in the past month. One possibility for people who may have received a cost-of-living increase in their income and who want to continue to give the same percentage to Covenant would be to dedicate a small percentage of their increased income to the Compassion Fund. Given that we have been blessed with a more manageable budget increase than many churches and an 8% increase in “active members” over the past year, many of us could likely do this without jeopardizing Covenant’s commitments to the General Fund and Christian Education.

Most of you are aware that a 3rd offering box dedicated to the Compassion Fund has been

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Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/23-1/22/23) \$24,729	\$20,900	-\$3,828
Christian Education	(8/1/22-1/22/23) \$91,493	\$89,688	-\$1,805

Serving at Covenant

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

Usually this space in the Courier is used to highlight a service or missions project that one or more of our members is involved in, but this month I want to highlight the Service and Missions Committee (SAM) itself. SAM is a longstanding committee of volunteers in our church that is responsible for identifying and/or creating service and mission projects that our congregation can be involved in locally and globally. One way we do this is by proposing a SAM budget to the deacons to be approved as part of the church budget by the congregation. This allows us to financially support our missionaries. We also support them through letters of encouragement and, when they are visiting our area, inviting them to be a part of our worship service. In addition, we encourage and fund short term mission trips for our youth that might be organized through their high school or college (like PLIA). Finally, SAM serves as the liaison between our church and local service organi-

zations such as the Gospel Mission, Mid-Sioux, Justice for All, Hope Haven, Habitat for Humanity, ATLAS and more.

SAM seeks to have both an impact on our local community as well as to support world missions. On a recent weekend, the SAM committee delivered jars of cookie mix and a letter of welcome to our church neighbors and, while we haven't done this for a few years now, we would like to organize and lead a mission and service trip to a destination like Nicaragua to use our muscles and minds to further mission outreach projects occurring there. The current committee includes Jeri Schelhaas (elder), Dwight VanTol (deacon), Terri Friend, Marcy Holwerda, and Mary Wielard. We would like to have a few more people join us, especially as a few of the current members have been on the committee for five plus years. We particularly want to encourage high school or college-aged persons who are interested in missions and service to join our committee. If you have a heart for spreading the gospel and God's love both near and far, please consider becoming a part of this vital ministry of our church.

-Dwight Van Tol

Worship Notes

There are worship plans in the works for the coming months, though details are still being worked out. In the meantime, here are a few things coming up:

February 12 Vespers

Some of you participated in the choir-led Vespers service in January and we hope to bring that back again in February. Watch for more information to come!

February 22 Ash Wednesday Service

We'll begin the season of Lent in worship with a service and imposition of ashes.

March 12 WE Service

We hope to have another WE service on March 12 following our morning service. We will again focus on Faith Practices, and this month we will learn together about the practice of Gratitude.

Speaking of WE services—*The Banner* highlighted Covenant's WE Service on Wonder in the January issue. Check it out on page 24!

Notes from the Deacons

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placed on the north end of the fellowship area for those who prefer this method of giving. But feel free to contact a deacon if you would like to use other methods, such as online giving or ACH transfers to the fund. For those new to Covenant (and as a reminder to the rest of us), the Compassion Fund is separate from the accounts that receive General Fund and Christian Education contributions. Although the deacons have requested and appreciate it when members give us permission to use funds “as needed,” this only allows us to redirect funds to more easily cover items that are part of our budgeted annual commitments—things like ministry, operational, worship, missions, or building-related expenditures, or Christian Education support. Compassion expenditures, in contrast, are not budgeted and are often difficult to anticipate. So, at this point, the Compassion Fund remains separate from the General and Christian Education Funds, which is why we have a separate box on the north end of the fellow-

ship area and a different account number for your ACH or Vanco payments. In spite of this minor complication, whenever you specify that you want part of your contribution to go to the Compassion fund using a giving envelope or on your check memo line, the deacons will correctly apply that amount to Compassion.

Details aside, the important work of the church continues because we are blessed with many faithful and generous givers. Thank you! You have been and continue to be a blessing to your deacons and we look forward to stewarding your funds and meeting the needs that are presented to us in 2023.

*Cheerfully submitted by John Visser, treasurer,
for your deacons (Ruth Clark, Pam De Jong,
Ross Feikema, Dane Hilma, Mike Janssen,
Les Syberma, Dwight Van Tol, John Visser)*

