

# Covenant Turns...



Here are the 50th anniversary celebrations that are coming up in the next few months!

## Church Picnic

You are all invited to the annual Sunday School Picnic on Sunday, September 24! Church education classes actually begin on September 10, but because of conflicts with the shelter house rental, we'll be celebrating the new school year on September 24. So join us after church for a potluck at Children's Park. Watch for more information to come about what to bring. Oh, and there will be



Pictured on the left: A rainy-day church picnic in 2019. And on the right: A little flashback to a Camp Foster church retreat in 2009. Check out Cambri's sweet grin!

games—and Val Zonnefeld said they would be fun, so prepare yourself for a good time!

## Church Retreat

One really neat part of living in community is sharing joy with each other, and an important part of this is taking the time to both celebrate and laugh. Over the past 50 years Covenant has never had a shortage of creative people who have been willing to bring a fun experience/experiment/activity/game/story/joke into our retreat so that we can experience the joy of laughing together. Please think about what has made you laugh that should be offered to your church, and contact Len or Lee Rhoda (rhoda@mtcnet.net) or John or Linda Visser (jlvisser@mtcnet.net) for possible inclusion in our October 13 Retreat night.

*-John Visser*

Courier

September 2023

COVENANT  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary, let's see what you know about Covenant's history! Here is another set of question for you to research this month!

1. When did Covenant elect the first woman to our Council and who was elected?
2. When was the first issue of the *Courier* published?
3. When, how many years, and who served on service teams who traveled to Haiti to build a Christian school after the devastating earthquake in 2010?
4. Who was the Covenant pastor who hid a bottle of whiskey behind the pulpit and why?
5. How long have Dale and June Brands been Covenant's janitors?

Answers to this month's questions will be in the October *Courier*—but we encourage you to ask around and find out before next month!

And here are the answers to the questions that were printed in last month's *Courier*:

- Q:** How many different hymnal books has Covenant had and what color were the covers?
- A:** The four colors of hymnals that Covenant has had were green, blue, grey, and red. For much of our history, hymnals were used in every service since songs were not

projected. In Covenant and other CRC congregations, changing the hymnal used was a significant and often controversial issue.

- Q:** When and who was the first child baptized in Covenant?
- A:** The first child baptized after Covenant was officially organized was Monica Jean Crull, daughter of Steve and Pat Crull. She was baptized on May 5, 1974. Two children were baptized during the period prior to official organization, so they were considered baptized in our mother church.
- Q:** When was Covenant remodeled with fellowship hall/classrooms added and what was the cost?
- A:** In 1997, Covenant approved a proposal to remodel our building with the cost projected to be \$991,458. The dedication of the remodeled church with the newly added fellowship hall and ground level access was in April of 1999.
- Q:** When did "children's church" begin to be part of Covenant's Sunday worship?
- A:** "Children's Church" for 3 to 5 year olds started at Covenant in 1977 during summers only. Year-round Children's Church began in February of 1985.



*One of the Covenant small groups enjoyed a progressive bike supper this past week!*

## Note from the Pastor

Tricia and I had a good couple of weeks away, and we also felt grateful to return to Covenant and the lives God has give us in Sioux Center.

My time away included a sermon seminar that focused on the power of the Holy Spirit for preaching and congregational worship. In the midst of two gifted seminar leaders, Rev. Dave Beelen and Rev. Joy Bonnema, and a dozen fellow pastors, we not only reflected regarding the Spirit, we also experienced fellowship with the Spirit. For example, Revs. Beelen and Bonnema introduced us to practices of anointing with water and oil in ways that renew our baptisms and build our fellowship. I thank Covenant for enabling me to participate in such a study time, and I look forward to discerning the leading of the Spirit in ongoing life at Covenant.

Part of our ongoing life right now is the celebration of our 50th anniversary as a congregation. On August 6, we had an opening event that took place in the midst of bad weather but turned out in a good way. It turns out that we don't need a bonfire to make 'smores, since people can prepare them in a microwave. In addition to some refreshments, the gathered group was able to sing and pray in encouraging ways, and we can feel grateful for a good start. We can feel grateful also for the quilting celebration in our August 20 worship service, and we can look forward to special games at our September 24 Sunday School picnic. God continues to work graciously among us in ways old and new.

-Pastor Joel

## Work & Worship

A couple weeks ago, Laremy and I were privileged to be a part of the "Work and Worship Seminar" hosted by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. It was co-directed by Katie Roelofs along with Matthew Kaemingk and Cory Willson, authors of a book by the same name, *Work and Worship: Reconnecting our Labor and Liturgy*, with contributing instruction and participation from The Porter's Gate songwriting collective. And it was a great week.

We didn't know quite what to expect. With the Porter's Gate musicians there, would it be a lot of song-writing and learning new songs? With the theologians, mostly discussion? With 20 or so other worship leaders, pastors, and professors, mostly an idea-fest? Well, it was a healthy mix of all and some rest and good food on the side.

We started the week thinking about the specific congregations we were part of—you! If, as Kaemingk and Willson argue, the primary touch and witness of our church is the people's daily work, do we know what the people do and therefore bring to worship? So, naturally, you educators came to mind, a few engineers and health-care workers, stay-at-home moms, a cookie baker I know well, many retirees, and my own kids. Then we wrote a narrative about a worker—real or imagined—and were asked to consider how worship might form this worker, or de-form them or re-form them.

And then, with many of you still in our minds, we spent time imagining you gathering from our community and your places of work and then scattering back into it, like

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# September Birthdays & Anniversaries

4	Angela Hannigan Isaac Maletoungou Val Zonnefeld Tim & Mimi Kamp	19	Charlie Wyenberg	27	Michael Ribbens
		20	Pam Adams Oliver Moss	28	Paul Clousing Aidan Vos
5	Marcia Westra	21	Lee Plasier	29	Levi Landman
8	Shirley Taylor	22	Rockne McCarthy Rose Rylaarsdam John Stevenson Viola Stiemsma		
9	Doug DeBoer				
13	Laura De Kruyf	25	Rachel Hibma Becky Stevenson		
15	Adam Kramer				
16	Kelly Crull	26	Morgan Hummel		



## Thank You!

To Covenant Christian Reformed Church:

In the seven years that we have been blessed to partner with you through your support of our ministry at LCC International University in Lithuania, your care and generosity are a huge part of what has kept us going. We couldn't do it without you! Thank you so much for your faithfulness, your generosity, and your eager interest in our lives and work!



*-The Groenewold Van Dyks*

Benjamin, Tricia, Miriam, and Peregrine

# September Scheduling



## Greeters

Donna B, Shirley, M, Ron O



## Ushers

Rockne MC, Sherri TN, Marcia W



## Coffee Servers

Natalie B, Dennis DJ, Deb H,  
James R, Daniel VS

## Substitutes

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

Rob H, Mark H, Dave S,  
Dennis VP, Marty VP, Sharon V



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, **September 18** for the October issue.



## Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Merrill MC

### September 3

AM Jeremy & Kristi H, Tricia K

### September 10

AM Daryl & Deb H, Jason & Sara H  
PM Mark & Lisa C, Dennis & Pam DJ

### September 17

AM Laremy & Becca DV, Laura J

### September 24

AM Ethan & Donna B, Alejandro & Isabel C

### October 1

AM Channon & Joni V, Barb T

## Formation Sunday Evenings

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

September 3: Vespers

September 10: Joint CRC worship at Covenant\*, Pastor Kurt Monroe preaching

September 17: Vespers

September 24: Vespers with Communion

*\*This is the last of the joint Sioux Center CRC worship gatherings for this summer.*

# Notes from the Deacons

Thank you for your continued support of Covenant’s worship activities, programs and projects. We were able to contribute our full 2022-23 allocation to the Christian schools we support , we continue to receive many “over and above” contributions toward the new roof, and we made it through July with a bit of a surplus in our General Fund.

Current pledges and contributions have already raised 70% of our \$180,000 goal. This goal is unchanged even though the “old roof” came in under budget because, after our recent deluge, we can’t delay installing a sloped roof section above the organ.

For those who weren’t able to make it to one of the presentations, please stay tuned for the next communication from the Covenant Capital Campaign Committee (CCCC). For those who have attended, and have either sent a gift, or are planning to send a gift, please remember that the only way we can accurately measure progress toward our goal, while also reducing the amount of interest paid, is to have pledge cards that accurately describe the planned total gift and the timing

of expected contributions. So if you are one of those folks who donated before you got a pledge card (or misplaced it) please see John Visser or Verlyn De Wit for a card that will help us with our planning.

Please also note that there is no good way for the deacons to allocate part of an “as needed” contribution to the roof until the campaign is finished. So please make sure all contributions to the new roof (and especially those coming directly from IRA funds to the church) are clearly marked as such. Thanks very much for your help with this!

*-Deacon John Visser*

On behalf of the Covenant Deacons,  
*Ruth Clark, Pam DeLong, Dane Hibma,  
 Kristi Hummel, Lee Mellema,  
 Josh Van Schouwen, Dwight VanTol*

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## Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/23-8/20/23) \$210,193	\$212,326	+\$2,133
Christian Education	(8/1/23-8/20/23) \$10,979	\$7,122	-\$3,857

*\* Please note that the Christian Education Fund numbers on the graph are based on our total commitment from the last fiscal year. We haven’t yet received an updated total to raise for this fiscal year. Hopefully next month’s numbers will be more accurate!*

## Work & Worship

*(Continued from page 3)*

the systolic and diastolic movement of blood into the heart. Kaemingk and Willson write that “worship must generously draw work and workers in the presence of the Lord, and it should also send them out the door with some systolic force...Movement in the Spirit is life—it is oxygen.” So we wrote gathering prayers and litanies with you in mind. We tried our hand at writing songs that would reorient you to the world and your work and send you out.

And then what about the in-between? We can’t very often bring our actual work as an offering into the sanctuary like the Israelites brought in their firstfruits? But how can we deepen our understanding of the offering as it connects to our daily work? And how can we keep in our minds who we are as workers as we approach the Table and receive Christ’s body and blood—Christ’s work for us? Members of our group came up with creative offering ideas and offered fresh words and songs for the Lord’s Supper litany.

We have returned with many good ideas and songs, but don’t worry, we have no intention to overhaul our worship, maybe just deepen.

In the meantime, all these questions still linger and inspire thoughts and dreams in us. One dream will be realized on Labor Day, September 4, when we try to emulate a night of worship like we were gifted at the seminar. With members of Good Shepherd Church, we plan to co-host a night of song and prayer at the Fruited Plain focusing our minds on our lives of labor and how our worship connects to that world here in Sioux Center. More information to come.

## A Gathering Prayer

Good morning to you Lord.  
Here we are, gathered again in this place.  
Did you watch us ascend to your house?  
What did it look like to you as we walked,  
biked and drove  
down Fourth Ave and East First Street,  
Highway 10 and Meadow Drive?  
Could you sense how we were feeling?  
Were we glad when they said unto us “it’s  
time for church?”

Did we come weary and heavy-laden?  
Can you hear us still catching our breath?

Do you recall where we have been this week?  
Did you witness the work of our hands...  
and our hearts and souls and minds?

And can you see what we have brought from  
our work as our offering?  
A widow’s mite? A tenth? Our first fruits?

Yes. We are here again because your answer  
is yes. You see us—you see when we sit  
and when we rise.

Yes. You offer rest for the weary and breath  
from your Holy Spirit.

Yes. You promise you will not forget our work  
but give us the desires of our hearts.

Yes. Your son saw a believer’s offering in the  
temple and shared the story with others.

So here we are again.  
Thank you for being here too.  
Take us as we are.  
We offer you our gifts, our lives, our worship.

*-Rebecca DeVries*

And remember that song survey we talked  
about last month in the Courier? Please help  
us by filling out it out!

<https://forms.gle/GaSyQT6zVVL8wZeE7>

# Covenant Quilts

*Dave Schelhaas wrote this for the Sioux Center News about our quilt celebration on August 20.*

This past Sunday morning (August 20) Covenant Church passed out home-made, personalized quilts to its eight young members who will attend kindergarten this fall. It's a tradition that has gone on for 23 years and required the creation of 139 quilts. As a way of honoring the quilters, current Covenant members who have received a school quilt were asked to bring it to church this past Sunday morning.

How did this come about?

Twenty-three years ago Natalie Brummel asked herself, "What can I do here at Covenant to show that I care?" and almost immediately answered, "Well, I know how to sew." So she and Laurie Zwart decided to use quilts rather than cards or casseroles to show love and concern.

They were joined by others and have turned out quilted pieces for members' weddings, for newborn babies, for member farewells, for special birthdays, as well as the kindergartners' blankets. Their mission is the same

as it has always been: to show Christ's love to brothers and sisters at Covenant, in our community, and our world.

In a 2005 article in the church magazine the *Covenant Courier*, Luanne Goslinga selects a few of the highlights of the quilters activities: "In 2001, a quilt for Tracy Boersma (oldest member) on her birthday; in 2002, farewell quilts for the Boots and Helmstetters; adoption quilts for Sam, Kaida and Max; in 2003, a freedom quilt for a 9/11 family; in 2004—17 weddings! A quilt for the family of a soldier killed in Iraq." And on and on for 23 years.

Covenant quilts have gone all over the world: Guatemala, Dominican Republic, China, Mexico, Canada, and all around the United States. Many Dordt students who attended Covenant have a quilted table runner that carries the memory of Covenant and Sioux Center with them as they have moved out into the world.

Over the years the number of quilters rose and fell. Today Brummel and Zwart along with Rin Goedhart, make up the Covenant quilting crew but their output continues at an amazing pace. Since those first quilts in the year 2000, the Covenant quilters have passed out over 467 quilted pieces—blankets, table runners, and pillowcases.

*-Dave Schelhaas*

