

Anniversary Book Reflections

I've read and edited more than 50 Covenant reflections/remembrances over the last couple of weeks. At first I thought this project was going to be "fine." Now, I think it is quite wonderful. I've read inspiring reminders of touching, ordinary, and meaningful events and people that have impacted lives—reminders of what Covenant has been and is. It's amazing

Covenant
Turns...



January WE Service!

Our January 50th Anniversary event will be held on Sunday, January 28, when we will gather for a WE service—an intergenerational worship gathering that will include a meal, fellowship, and learning together around tables. We will focus on the Faith Practice of Celebrating! Our tentative plan is to meet at 5:00 PM in our church fellowship hall. Watch for more details in January!

-The 50th Anniversary Planning Team

how an ordinary yet extraordinary history of sorts gets woven together from small snippets shared by many different people.

Even more importantly maybe, I think this booklet can motivate us to live up to the expectations we have for ourselves as we tell old stories and listen to ways new members have been drawn to us. Including old timer and newer comer contributions works just right. At this point, the number of submissions from younger and newer families is a bit slim, so consider this my encouragement to add your contribution to this lovely little 50th anniversary booklet about who we are as the body of believers at Covenant in 2023.

-Sally Jonzma



This Youth Group has proved its domestic and culinary skills with their hard work preparing to feed all of us before the congregational meeting. Hopefully Morgan Hummel is using those dish-washing skills at home too!

Worshipping at SCCS—FAQ



There is a sense of excitement and anticipation around this building—along with a little dose of nervousness—as we look forward to the Sanctuary Refresh Project! The committee has been working hard on plans for what will happen here in the building during that time, but there are also many working behind the scenes to figure out what things will look like for Covenant as we worship at Sioux Center Christian School beginning on **January 7** and continuing through March. There are things we know and have figured out—but there are also lots of things we’re still working on. We hope you feel free to ask questions about how things will work. And we hope that all of us will have a spirit of flexibility and patience as we move into this new season at Covenant.

The SCCS building is familiar to many of you—but maybe not to all. So hopefully this will answer some of the questions you may have. So here are some things we know:

What to Take to Worship:

We will not be providing Bibles and hymnals while we worship at SCCS so we encourage you to take your own Bibles along! Our worship liturgy and music will be printed and projected as usual. We have also decided for the sake of simplicity that we will not serve coffee/juice after the service during this time. So we encourage you to take your own mug of coffee/tea if you’d like!

Parking

There are parking lots along the north side of the building, on the west side, and on the south side. There two designated handicap parking spots in the lot northwest of the main door and one spot in the lot to the northeast of the door. We also ask that everyone keep all of the “Visitor Parking” in the lot northeast of the main door as handicap parking or parking for those who need to be closer to the entrance. Street parking is also available around the building.

Entering the Building:

We will be using the main school entrance on the north side of the building. And once you’re in, head to the west (right) toward the gym! There is a few steps down to the gym or an elevator is available. Bathrooms are located just inside the main entrance (on the way to the gym). SCCS doesn’t have coat racks available to use and we don’t plan to bring any in—so keep your coat with you!

Set Up/Take Down

We’re still in the planning stages of figuring out how to organize chair set-up and clean-up. But we do know that we will probably need your help with this task! Watch for more information to come.

Nursery & Children in Worship

Nursery and Children in Worship will be functioning at SCCS. Thanks to Courtney Rylaarsdam and Jenni Mellema (nursery) and to Cheri Horstman (Children in Worship) for working on this! The nursery will be in the orchestra room and Children and Worship in the band room. (Both are to your right on the way to the gym.)

Livestreaming:

We hope to still livestream our worship services during this time, but there are still some details to work out. A number of Cove-

nant folk have put lots of hard work into making sure our livestream works well in our building, and we expect that the quality of the livestream will not be quite the same during this time, but hopefully it will be functional when you aren't able to be present.

Church Education:

There will be no church education classes in January. That will hopefully give everyone some time to adjust and work out the kinks before we begin classes. When classes re-start, they will meet in classrooms at SCCS. Watch for more information next month about restarting classes in February!

Kids

Many of our Covenant kids feel VERY comfortable in this space. It's important that we respect the building and the spaces we are welcome to use—and not overstep those boundaries. Make sure your kids know that the whole school is not our playground while we're worshipping here!

Mailboxes:

Our church mailboxes won't be as useful to us during this time. They are still available to use, but I anticipate many won't check them

often during this time. Feel free to pop in church if you need to put something in a box. Newsletters that normally would be in your mailboxes will be brought to SCCS for you to pick up.

Lost & Found

Any belongings that we find after our worship services will be brought back to our church building! Stop in or call the office if you left something.

Evening Worship

We hope to be able to worship in our fellowship hall on Sunday evenings, but we're not entirely certain when we'll meet in January. (See more information on page 5.)

SCCS has been very helpful and accommodating in letting us use their facility. Thanks especially to Donna Brue and Eileen Buiters at SCCS for helping work out the details. And thanks to the many council and committee members and staff for helping to make sure this transition goes as smoothly as possible!

-Sara Plaeystra



The Youth Group lasagna crew!

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Jenni Mellema	14	Becky Donahue Pastor Joel Kok Michael Vander Plaats	30	Amie Smit Jeff Taylor
2	Dallas Apol			31	Sos & Kara Maletoungou
3	Jo Alberda Penny Donahue Paola Gracia	16	Peregrine Groenewold Rog Vanden Hoek		
5	Andy & Rachel Landman	20	Jenni Breems Tricia Kok Dave Kramer		
9	Lois Vander Zee	26	Jonathan Breems		
10	Bryanna Castelan	29	Don Ten Napel Trena Van Wyk		
12	Terry Friend				



Covenant Members Honored

Some of our Covenant members have been featured in the news lately. Did you catch these stories?

Barb Mellema was nominated and selected to join the Delta Air Lines' prestigious Chairman's Club for her leadership, achievement, and dedication in her position as Senior Coordinator-MSP of Global Cleanliness for Delta Air Lines. Click here to read more (and to see Brian and Barb all dressed up for the event!): <http://tinyurl.com/MellemaNamedDelta>

Doug De Boer was honored along with a team he works with as recipients of the Meritorious Achievement Award in Outreach and Informal Education. Doug and the others on his committee have worked hard in pioneering and leading the "Science Kits for Libraries" program which benefits kids in our community as

well as many others in the upper Midwest. You can read more here:

<http://tinyurl.com/SiouxCenterManHonored>

If you get a chance, congratulate both of them on their awards!



Sevriona Postma and Eden Hawley prepping lasagnas with a smile!

January Scheduling



Greeters

Deb H, Rock MC, Len R



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Courtney R



Ushers

Dennis DeJong, Mark H, Marty VP

Substitutes

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

Wil A, Ruth C, Marge DB,
Del VZ, John Z

January 7

AM Jason & Sara H, Ethan & Donna B

January 14

AM Mark & Lisa C, Channon & Joni V

January 21

AM Mark & Cheri H, Laura J

January 28

AM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Alejandro & Isabel C

February 4

AM Luke & Sarah H, Ryan & Val Z



Thanks for serving!

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, **January 22** for the February issue.

Formation Sunday Evenings

During our sanctuary refresh project, we hope to be able to hold our Sunday evening Vespers services in the fellowship hall. However, January will be a bit up in the air since we aren't sure how soon we'll have a temporary sound system functioning. So join us for our (tentative) 6:00 PM Sunday evening gatherings this month:

January 7: No evening service

January 14 & 21: Vespers (Tentative)

January 28: WE Service & Meal (5:00 PM)

Notes from the Deacons

As we step into the new year, we are excited to embark on a journey together as we begin the Sanctuary Refresh Project. Everyone's commitment and dedication to Covenant has been a source of inspiration, and we are confident that with your help, we can make our sanctuary a space of renewed joy, warmth, and worship for the future.

We understand that life is busy, and many have generously contributed to the church in various ways. We want to emphasize that your time is just as significant as any financial contribution. The act of physically being present, working side by side, strengthens our bonds to each other and reinforces and demonstrates Christ's love.

Mark your calendars as we have two firm dates for volunteer opportunities where your hands and hearts are needed:

1. **Friday, January 5:** 2:00 PM–5:00 PM
 - Moving furniture/equipment
 - Light demo
2. **Saturday, January 6:** 8:00 AM–Noon
 - Sealing organ opening
 - Light demo

Your physical presence during these hours is invaluable, as we come together to reshape

the space that holds so many memories and moments of worship. Whether you have an eye for design or are a pro at handling tools, there's a role for everyone in this collective effort. A sign up sheet will be created in the coming days so people can indicate when they can volunteer. Keep an eye open for that communication.

In addition to the mentioned dates, there will be further opportunities for volunteering during the construction period. As the project progresses, we will keep you informed about additional times for cleaning and other tasks. Flexibility and your willingness to adjust your schedules to support the project is genuinely appreciated.

Let us remember the heart of our mission statement, "Growing in Christ, Sharing His Love." As we join hands and hearts in the Sanctuary Refresh Project, we are not just renovating a physical space; we are embodying the spirit of our mission. Your time, dedication, and love are integral to this transformative journey. Together, let us make Covenant CRC a beacon of joy, warmth, and worship for generations to come.

Josh Van Schouwen

On behalf of the Covenant Deacons:
 Ruth Clark, Pam DeJong, Dane Hibma,
 Kristi Hummel, Lee Mellema,
 Dwight VanTol, John Visser

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/23-12/17/23) \$309,108	\$318,570	+\$9,462
Christian Education	(8/1/23-12/17/23) \$36,877	\$45,328	+\$8,451



As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary, let's see what you know about Covenant's history!

We're going to look again at the demographics of the Covenant congregation—both in the past and now. The comparisons are interesting and sometimes surprising! Can you make some guesses???

1. How many current members/families have been members at Covenant for all 50 years?
2. How many current members/families have been members for 10 years or less?
3. How many members of Covenant are over age 80?
4. How many couples at Covenant have been married 50 years or more?
5. How many families had/have three or more children in 1974? How about in 1999? And in 2023?

Answers to this month's questions will be in the February *Courier*!

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

How Many???	1974	1999	2023
Dordt employees	47%	51%	28%
Farmers	2%	3%	0%
Business Owners/ Employees	50%	36%	25%
Retired	7%	3%	39%
Single	7%	10%	20%
NW Iowa Natives	44%	43%	43%
Grade School Students	76#	77#	70#
High School Students	38#	74#	36#

Some Additional Comments:

The percentages and numbers are based only on analysis of church directory information. The percentages for Dordt employees and NW Iowa natives are based on having one family member of a family working at Dordt or born in NW Iowa. If percentages regarding Dordt were based on at least one family member being an employee, graduate of Dordt, or parent of someone who attended Dordt the "associated with Dordt" percentage would be approximately 80%.

The January Series

While we have enjoyed hosting a livestream of the January Series here at Covenant each new year, we will be taking a year off from this tradition. Because of the sanctuary remodel that will be happening beginning in January, we were not sure we would be able to have adequate sound or video set up in the fellowship hall to be able to host this event. We have lots of bookmarks and pamphlets with the schedule for this year and we encourage you to grab some information and watch on your own—or invite a friend or two over to watch together! More information about this year's January Series schedule and how to watch at home can be found at <https://calvin.edu/january-series/speakers/>

Covenant Capital Campaign Committee Update

As noted at the congregational meeting, as we wind down our 2023 financial year, we are also pressing ahead with the second phase of our building project and cleaning up some unfinished business related to damage caused by our “thousand-year” ten-inch rain back in August. Never a dull moment!

We want to thank the congregation again for its generosity in 2023. The need was great, and our members responded with what quite likely is the largest total amount ever contributed by a Covenant congregation in a single year. We dealt with a significant problem (a deteriorating, asbestos-laden roof) that had been hanging over our heads for many years and did so in record time! This frees us up to move ahead on the Refresh project, updates on which have come both at the congregational meeting and in this Courier.

The Covenant Capital Campaign Committee (CCCC) continues its work. Although no new decisions have been made about financing the Refresh phase, earlier discussions recognized this larger amount (we continue to believe we can do this for the originally budgeted amount of \$270,000) should be raised in a bit more relaxed manner than the roof. So, we will try to collect the amount needed for the project over a period of years rather than months, likely three years (based on preliminary discussions last spring). But this is not to say early gifts are not greatly beneficial. If we were to raise money evenly over a three-year period, we would incur around \$20,000 in interest expenses. Early gifts have the potential to reduce that number significantly. And, as these improvements will benefit us all, we are once again hoping for widespread participation.

So how can you help the committee? One of our initial members had to resign because of schedule conflicts and some of our grey-haired members will be out of town for off and on extended periods this spring. So would you like to join the committee? Or, we can all be project volunteers (per Josh’s description of these opportunities elsewhere in this issue). Or start planning how a Refresh pledge or gift would fit into your giving plans well before our request. We’ll need both gifts and loans because the total cost will likely have to be paid by April of this year. So if you might have money to lend, please contact John Visser (unless you are already on his list). Thanks in advance for your participation!!

-John Visser



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!



We have become great grandparents for the first time! Our great-granddaughter, Selah Marit Van Horssen was born to Jacob and Cora Van Horssen in Sioux Falls, SD. Our daughter Aimee and her husband Brian are now grandparents for the first time.

-Duane & Jan Bajema