

Covenant
Turns...



50th Anniversary Celebration Weekend!

Since August 2023, we have been intentional about celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness to our church. And now we are thrilled to invite you to a special weekend to officially mark and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Covenant! Our former pastors and charter members have been invited, and we hope that you will mark your calendars today and join us for some of the events listed below.

Friday, April 26 | 6:00 PM

50th Anniversary Dinner at Covenant

18+ catered by Downtown Grille

\$20 per plate

RSVP details to come

Saturday, April 27 | 9:30 AM

Coffee time with former pastors and charter members at The Fruited Plain Cafe

Sunday, April 28

10:00 AM Morning Worship Celebration

6:00 PM Evening gathering with former pastors invited to share memories and reflections.

-The 50th Anniversary Planning Team

Celebration!

We had such a fun time learning about the faith practice of celebration at our WE service in January. We sang and danced and testified to God's goodness in our lives! We created beautiful art that we are turning into a banner and we feasted on delicious taverns, that I must say hit the spot after all that dancing. Thanks to all who helped make it happen and all who joined us. Here are a few things the family of God at Covenant is celebrating:

What joy!

- My jade plant is growing new leaves.
- The grandchildren are coming over.
- Our kids are taking on adult responsibilities and thriving.
- Look at Jones over there and listen to him laugh!
- We came back from behind and won the hockey game.
- I went for a run outside!
- I came home from the hospital. How much more wonderful when I go to my eternal home!

I proclaim: We are worth celebrating!

- I published my first issue of *The Diamond*
- I played in the NISO concert
- I made it into Honors Orchestra

(Continued on page 2)

Courier

March 2024

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Celebration

(Continued from page 1)

- I finished my degree
- I won a pretty nice award
- I tried a new soup recipe and it was good.

I can't wait!

- I'm going to be in *Little House on the Prairie: the Musical* (said 8 Covenant kids)
- Soccer!
- I get to spend time with my new granddaughter in California.
- Trailblazer Week. The auction. The pine-wood derby!

Did you see that?

- Birds at the bird feeders and all their colors.
- And oh, the sparkling frost on each tree branch.
- Did you hear the cracking noises as they started to melt?
- Those sundogs! God is good.
- The skilled eyes and hands of doctors and nurses who took care of my dad.

God is faithful!

- The snow is melting and the days are getting longer.
- I ran into my aunt and uncle at a restaurant. It was a delightful, unexpected mini-family reunion.
- My great-granddaughter turned 18.
- We've been married for 25 years.
- My sister turned 85.
- One generation will call to the next: "Our God is good and his hand is strong!"



Our Accident & Charlie's Death

February 17, 2008 was the date of Charlie and my fateful accident. We were going up to Sioux Falls to see our new granddaughter who came from Ethiopia. Unfortunately, we were involved in a terrible accident. Charlie was 61 and I was 59. It has been 7 years since Charlie died. Many of you remember me taking care of Charlie. I could not leave him alone the whole time. At the beginning I took him to the food store with me but after a few years that became impossible because I could not push a wheelchair and the grocery cart. Charlie was unable to work the chair because of the injuries he received. That was when Dave Schelhaas faithfully came and sat with him for the hour I was away at the food store.

On February 24, 2017 Charlie died after getting progressively more disabled. It was labeled a brain injury, and my son Michael took his brain scans up to Mayo Clinic and they said he was too injured for the treatments available. Michael did not tell me this sad news so I was hopeful for some gains in ability.

When I went on my first date with Charlie, he arranged to go to a baseball game in New York City. It was between the Dodgers and the Mets at the Mets Stadium. It was pretty exciting because I had never been in a professional stadium. Along with this excitement Charlie told me of his desire to serve the Lord in all he did. We married before his final year of college, then we went to Connecticut for an engineering job at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft. He left home early for work to avoid traffic and spent that time studying philosophy. We also were excited about the ICS and he read their books too. While in Connecticut we could not find an Orthodox Presbyterian church, but we did find a Christian Reformed church, so we became CRC at ages 19 for me

and 21 for Charlie.

Even though there were no Christian schools in Connecticut, Charlie knew of those in New Jersey. His youngest two brothers transferred from the public school to the Christian school. Charlie learned of an opening at Eastern Christian and was offered the job. After teaching there for eight years, he applied at Dordt College for an Education position but the very wise president of Dordt, Rev. Haan, asked if Charlie really would rather start the Engineering program. Of course he did and he reveled in doing this job. At the young age of 70, Charlie went to be with the Lord who he loved with his whole heart and soul.

-Pam Adams

Pastoral Group

Dinner Schedule



We are going ahead with our spring Pastoral Group Dinners! We'll gather in the church fellowship hall at noon on these Sundays:

March 10—Goedhart/Hummel
March 17—DeWit/DeJong
March 24—Schelhaas/Mellema
April 7—Stiemsma/Clark
April 14—Van Wyk/Van Tol
April 21—Christians/Van Schouwen

Wondering which Pastoral Group you're in?

The Pastoral Group lists can be found on our website:
<https://covenantcrc.net/directory-committees/>

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

4	Brian Mellema Lee Rhoda	14	Mike & Laura Janssen Roger & Linda Vanden Hoek	24	Channon Visscher
5	Ben Bailey	15	Matt & Juliet Jewett	25	Emma Haan
6	Mark McCarthy	17	Sean Hannigan Claire Van Schouwen	31	Brandon Hummel
7	Emma Mercado Castelan Lincoln Rylaarsdam	19	Benjamin Groenewold Cheri Horstman		
8	Sara Ploegstra Brooklyn Rylaarsdam	20	Carol Apol Mark Tazelaar		
10	Jeff Ploegstra Lila Sybesma	21	Wil & Jo Alberda		
11	Benjamin Ploegstra Del Vander Zee	23	Mike Janssen Tricia Van Dyk Beth Vanden Berg		



Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, March 28 | 6:00

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 29 | 12:00 PM

Easter Sunday Worship Service

Sunday, March 31 | 10:00 AM



Lila Janssen and Lily Wyenberg spent some time singing through the hymnal during the WWW pizza and game night at church.

March Scheduling



Greeters

Alejandro C, Lisa C, Verlyn DW



Ushers

Jo A, Jan B, Jeff T

Substitutes

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

Doug DB, Cheri H, Tricia K, Les S,
Lois VZ, Channon V



Thanks for serving!

Are you interested in serving in any of these ministries, but aren't currently on the schedule? Contact Sara in the church office—we'd love to add you in! (covenant@mtcnet.net)

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, **March 25** for the April issue.



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Courtney R

March 3

AM Tom & Ruth C, Bob & Rebecca DS

March 10

AM Lee & Jenni M, Marcy H

March 17

AM Jake & Trena VW, Ryan & Angela H

March 24

AM Kurt & Sharon V, Lee R

March 31

AM Rob & Megan H, Duane & Jan B

April 7

AM John & Linda V, Steve & Pat C

Formation Sunday Evenings

During our sanctuary refresh project, we plan to hold our Sunday evening Vespers services in the fellowship hall. So join us for our 6:00 PM Sunday evening gatherings this month:

March 3: Vespers

March 10: Vespers

March 17: Vespers

March 24: Vespers

March 31: No Vespers (Easter evening)

Notes from the Deacons

In our Monday night meetings and email threads, discussions among the Covenant Deacons often revolve around finance-related matters such as expenses, costs, allocations, spending, savings, fiscal plans, frugality, income, investments, and much more. While finances hold a significant place in our conversations, they are not the sole focus. However, on behalf of the Covenant Deacons, we feel it's important to pause and reflect on the generosity and support we've recently received with our various projects.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your contributions to Covenant CRC. As Proverbs 11:25 reminds us, "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." Through your dedication, whether through time, talent, or financial resources, we've witnessed many projects come to fruition at Covenant.

Stewardship is central to our Covenant family, as emphasized in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Furthermore, our faithfulness expresses the same feeling of Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

We're reminded that our true riches lie not in earthly treasures but in the collective work of our congregation, and much, much more, which allows us to embody the hands and feet of Jesus through acts of generosity and kindness. May God bless you abundantly for your sacrificial giving, and may His grace continue to shine upon each and every one of you.

Thank you,
-Lee Mellema

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



We are excited to see the progress and can't wait to worship in the sanctuary again!

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/24-2/19/24) \$45,860	\$56,655	+\$10,795
Christian Education	(8/1/23-2/19/24) \$53,472	\$56,868	+\$3,396



As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary, let's see what you know about Covenant's history! Here are some new questions for this month that focus on the sanctuary remodel currently in process:

1. When we're back in our sanctuary, Covenant will again have access to our pipe organ originally installed in the 1970s. How many pipes does this organ have?
2. How many contractors have or will be involved in the sanctuary remodel?
3. How many new lights will be installed in the sanctuary?
4. How many sound system speakers will be installed?
5. How many projector screens will the sanctuary have?

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

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

- Q:** When did almost all areas of the Covenant building become handicap accessible?
- A:** None of Covenant's building was handicap accessible until the remodel and addition of the fellowship hall was completed in 1999.

- Q:** What area of Covenant's building that is presently not handicap accessible will have access after our remodel is finished?
- A:** Our pulpit area has not been handicap accessible. After our current remodel, all areas of the church, including the pulpit area, will be accessible.
- Q:** Approximately how many of Covenant members have hearing aids to help them hear as they worship?
- A:** At least 10 (and possibly more!) members of Covenant have hearing aids, which greatly enhance the quality of their worship experience.
- Q:** Approximately how many Covenant members' access to worship involves the use of a cane, walker, or wheelchair?
- A:** At this time about 8 members use wheelchairs, walkers, or canes when they attend worship services. It is not unusual to have visitors who also need assistance with their personal mobility.
- Q:** What percentage of worshipers who attend Covenant are handicapped, disabled, or in need of assistance as they attend our worship services?
- A:** The initial thought when the question regarding how many of Covenant's members are handicapped was asked was to consider various physical issues that our members have. But the best and correct answer is that 100% of our members are handicapped, disabled, and very much in need of assistance. As author Amy Kenny indicates, we are all, 100%, sinners. So in God's eyes, we are very much in need until Jesus makes us whole.

Serving at Covenant

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

“¡Funcionó!” (It worked!) I love hearing this phrase. As I said in my last update, I spent the first two weeks teaching the staff how to implement a variety of strategies. Now, I am spending time observing and coaching. Often, I find myself saying to a teacher, “Remember this strategy that I taught you. Let’s try it with this student.” Or something like, “Let’s modify this strategy in this way and see what happens.” Then, as I review the methodology for implementing the strategy and coach them through implementing it, I get to see them making those connections between knowledge and application. However, what I love most is when they come up to me later, after they’ve had a chance to try it on their own, and they say, usually with a big grin, “It worked!”



While partnering with the teachers is very enjoyable, working with the students is even more fun. On Friday, I had the opportunity to work with this young man in our vocational program (pictured above). I have known him since he started attending Tesoros de Dios

when he was just starting elementary school. Now, Oliver has completed high school and is attending Tesoros to learn some vocational skills. It truly was a delight to get to spend a few hours interacting with him. Another delight is talking with the parents of our students. One mother expressed her appreciation for my ability to converse easily with her. She told me she liked being able to share her concerns with me directly rather than feeling like she needed to communicate with me through a translator to ensure that I understood her. For my part, being able to connect with teachers, students, and parents makes me truly feel part of the team here.

I have a couple of prayer requests for my last 5 weeks here: 1. I will be doing a large multi-school workshop on March 5 on teaching literacy skills to children with significant disabilities. Please pray that God will give me the right words to say and that teachers will be open to the ideas I will present. 2. I am also going to be leading three weeks of “Parent School” sessions for the parents of our students at Tesoros de Dios. Please pray that I make good connections with the parents, that my teaching is relevant to their situation, and that they are able to implement the ideas successfully (even though I might not still be here to hear them say, “¡Funcionó!”

-Kathleen Van Tol

The orphanage that we adopted Isla from is hosting a mission trip to help with renovating a larger space for the children (and a space they will now own and no longer rent). We are in the process of adopting again from this agency/orphanage and so we will not be participating in the mission trip as we are saving

(Continued on page 9)

Serving at Covenant

(Continued from page 8)

for our future trips to Liberia. But maybe someone else might be interested in this mission opportunity! We absolutely love the "aunties" that work at the orphanage and want to assist them in this project as much as we can! A flyer is hanging on the bulletin board by the mailboxes or request a copy from the church office!

-Matt & Juliet Jewett

Here's some more info:

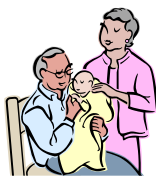
New Horizons Adoption Agency Mission Trip

Recently, International New Horizons Adoption Agency purchased a transitional home in Liberia to render more space and permanency for children eligible for adoption. In July, a mission team will provide their helping hands serving the Lord our God by renovating and updating the home. The trip is open to those 18+ or 16 with an adult (limit of 15 people).

Tentative dates: July 12-20 (dates may change by a day or two due to pricing)

Cost: \$4,300 which includes:

- Travel (international airline ticket and local Liberia transportation)
- Lodging
- Food (3 meals/day)
- Project supplies
- Activities (subject to change)
 1. Liberian church service
 2. Monkey Refuge/waterpark resort
 3. Village experience
 4. Day at the orphanage



Grandma Alert! *Grandpa Alert!*

My daughter, Rachael Eggebeen, and her husband, Ed Vander Woude, and their daughter, Elsie, age 8, have adopted 3



siblings. They welcomed to their forever family: Theo who is 18 years old; Alicia who is 16 years old; and Karina who is 3 years old. They bring to eight the number of grandchildren for Pat Eggebeen.

-Pat Eggebeen



Calvin James Kooima was born on February 14 at the Orange City Hospital. Parents are Colton and Jordyn Kooima, grandparents are Jon and Donelle

Oostra, and first time great-grandparents are Ron and Carol Oostra. We thank God for this precious gift!

-Ron & Carol Oostra

Senior Needs Volunteers

A new and needed pool of volunteers is being formed at Covenant in response to the needs of various people at Covenant who may need rides to local doctor appointments that cannot be provided by family for various reasons. A list of potential volunteers will be developed of people who are willing to be contacted to serve if needed. The list can be used by the deacons as they see fit.

No commitment is expected. We are hoping that a pool of names will be developed of people who are willing to provide this service if they are available.

If you are willing to have your name and phone number added to this list or if you want additional information, contact Mary Ploegstra at (320)220-2117 or Jan Bajema at (712) 441-7316.

-Jan Bajema:

Senior Needs Committee



The sanctuary remodel is progressing! Lights are going in, steps for the platform are being re-constructed, the drywall is in, and mudding and taping is getting done!