

*Covenant
Turns...*



50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner!



We hope you can attend our 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner on Friday, April 26 at 6:00 PM. In the company of former pastors and charter members, we will enjoy a delicious meal together catered by The Downtowne Grille in Orange City.

Jim Schaap will be our master of ceremonies for the night; Lee Mellema will lead us in a competitive game of Covenant Trivia at our tables; and, well, you'll have to wait and see what other fun awaits us! Please sign up by clicking the QR code. The cost is \$20 per person (18+). Payment will be collected the night of the dinner. Please contact the office (722-4465, covenant@mtcnet.net) if you are having any difficulties signing up or if you would like to make it possible for others to attend by paying for their dinner. Because this is a catered dinner, please sign up by April 7.

-The 50th Anniversary Planning Team

Christian Ed Updates



Thank you to all who contributed to the success of the 2024 Auction! We are grateful for a night of laughs, friendly competition, and cake! And to top it off, we were able to raise \$18,684, which might be the most money we've ever made! We couldn't have done it without the hard work of our committee members, our auctioneer, Tom Clark; his assistants, Mark Christians and Lee Mellema; and our two runners, Ben Ploegstra and



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Courier

April 2024

COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

From the Council

The Council wants to pass along to the congregation a summary of the Classis Iakota meeting that was held in March. When we move back into our sanctuary, we hope to be able to gather after a worship service for dialogue regarding this Classis meeting. Pastor Joel, Chris Goedhart, and Dwight Van Tol were our delegates and can add some further observations, and we will open the floor for some questions and answers during that time.

Highlights of the March 5 Classis Iakota Meeting held at Trinity CRC in Rock Valley

Much time in the morning was spent deliberating over several proposed overtures to synod. Four overtures were finally adopted.

- An overture which asks synod to declare that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 and sexual ethics (along with all unrepentant sin) are salvation issues based on Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87.
- An overture which asks synod to amend Church Order, Supplement, Article 5-B which has to do with regulations concerning the procedure to be followed in the submission of a confessional-difficulty gravamen (an official grievance/concern about some aspect of our creeds and confessions).
- An overture which asks synod to re-examine ecumenical relations with the Reformed Church in America in light of recent developments within that denomination.
- An overture which asks synod to call on all CRC churches who have publicly stated that they are no longer willing to call practicing same-sex relationships a sin to either repent of their decision or disaffiliate from the CRCNA.

Classis granted the requests of Barry Miedema, Trevor Mouw, Nathan Nieuwendorp, and Thomas Soodsma to have their respective licenses to exhort be renewed for another two years.

Having received word from Bridge of Hope Ministries that the job descriptions for Sam & Gail Ashmore were clarified, the Classical Interim Committee shared that Sam & Gail may now be ordained as Commissioned Pastors in the CRCNA.

Elections which took place throughout the day led to the following results:

- Bob Drenten to serve on the CRCNA Council of Delegates
- Kurt Monroe, pastor of First CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Minister delegate to synod
- Stan Wynia, from Bethel CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Elder delegate to synod
- Jevon Groenewold, from First CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Deacon delegate to synod
- Drew Hoekema, pastor for Platte CRC, to be the fourth officebearer delegate to synod

Reports were given from:

- Lee & Doug De Groot on behalf of Minn-Ikota Youth Network
- Tara Boer on behalf of the Classical Safe Church Team
- Kathleen Ridder on behalf of Calvin University
- Bob Drenten on behalf of Calvin Theological Seminary
- John Lee on behalf of the CRC Council of Delegates
- Brad Meinders on behalf of Resonate Global Mission
- Ron Vos on behalf of World Renew

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Note from the Pastor

After the Anniversary?!

At our 50th anniversary service on April 28, we will read and pray these words from God: “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” (Psalm 145:8) We will also sing that prayer in the hymn “One Generation Will Call to the Next.” (LUYH 562) And further, we will live out those words from God in all kinds of ways, including by the renewing of our baptisms.

To renew our baptisms, we can think of Paul’s baptism teachings in Romans 6, in which the Apostle teaches that we live out our baptisms by dying to sin and rising to new life in Christ. (See Romans 6:1-11; see also Ephesians 4:22-24, where Paul teaches us to put off our old selves and put on our new selves.) In addition, we live out Jesus baptizing all his people with his Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:17) by devoting ourselves to four central practices, as revealed in Acts 2:42:

1. The Apostles’ Teaching
2. The Fellowship
3. The Breaking of Bread
4. The Prayers

At this point, I encourage you to ask yourself: In what ways do I devote myself to those practices? And as you consider that question, both personally and communally, you can also consider some hopes and plans we can explore after Easter.

My hope is that as we return to our refreshed sanctuary, we can engage in some post-worship gatherings we call “Edifying Engagements.” So in May we hope to regather in our sanctuary after worship, in order to explore together what it means to be a member of the body of Christ, both specifically in regard

to the body at Covenant and also in regard to the one body around the world.

My further hope is that after we celebrate Pentecost on May 19, we can devote time to baptismal renewal in various ways on May 26. Perhaps some of our young members will profess their faith. Perhaps some of their peers will stand alongside them to renew their baptisms also. And perhaps every member of the congregation can consider visiting the baptismal font at some time in order to remember that, as truly as we can see and touch the water there, so truly has Jesus anointed us with his Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, I can share that I feel deeply grateful to our Lord for liturgical baptism renewals I have experienced at the Jordan River (in 2017), at Sandy Hollow (in 2022), and at a preaching and worship seminar (in 2023). Friends, in Christ, let’s find all kinds of ways to renew and live out our baptisms together!

-Pastor Joel

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:

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/>

April Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Auden Mellema Marty Vander Plaats	13	Gavin Ver Steeg	26	Alejandro Castelan
2	Brian & Barb Mellema	15	Justin Bailey	29	Sarah Stiemsma
3	Rebecca DeVries	17	April Crull Eli Horstman Dylan Kramer Rose Postma	30	Jacob Van Tol
6	John Visser				
7	Megan Haan	20	Jackson Visscher		
8	Sam Eppinga Isla Jewett	21	Nathan Maletougou		
9	Sharon Dykhuizen	22	Stella Ribbens		
11	Sara Eppinga	25	Eden Hawley		



Congrats!

The De Wit/De Jong pastoral group celebrated the wedding of Micah and Jayden at their pastoral group dinner this month! Olga made a wedding cake and the group gifted them with some house plants. (And apparently growing a house plant was on Jayden's bucket list!) Congrats to the Dykstras!

Christian Ed Updates

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Layne Vos. So if you see them, tell them how much you appreciate their efforts!

Water Softener Salt Sale Delivery

April 6 is the big day when Covenant and Bridge of Hope will deliver the 2,000+ bags of softener salt we sold in March! If you are able to deliver 40lb bags of salt, we would appreciate your help! If you are not able to physically deliver salt, please consider signing up to bring refreshments for our workers! And we



would appreciate your prayers for safety and for good weather that day! Sign up using the QR code or contact Emily Kramer (712-441-7539, evanderhart@yahoo.com).

-Emily Kramer

for the Christian Education Committee

April Scheduling



Greeters

Isabel C, Dave S, Marv W



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Kris VP



Ushers

Rebecca DS, Joan MC, Kurt V



Coffee Servers

Jenni B, Rin G, Jason H,
Andy L, Ron O

Substitutes

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

Pat C, Rob H, Mark H,
Lee R, Beth VB, 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, April 22 for the May issue.

April 7

AM John & Linda V, Steve & Pat C

April 14

AM Dave & Emily K, Tricia K

April 21

AM Nick & Jenni B, Donna & Ethan B

April 28

AM James & Courtney R, Jason & Sara H

May 5

AM Andy & Rachel L, Daryl & Deb H

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

April 7: Vespers with Unity
Knightsounds singing

April 14: Vespers

April 21: Vespers

April 28: Anniversary Celebration
evening gathering with
former pastors sharing
memories and reflections.

Note from the Deacons

Deacon and Building Refresh Finance Update

The deacons and the Finance Committee would like to thank you for a healthy financial start to 2024. Some of you pay attention to the graphics in the Courier that show shortage and surpluses in the churches accounts, but because most churches (including Covenant) operate with a cash-based accounting system, those numbers can be misleading. For example, if some of our senior givers write large checks from their retirement IRAs at the beginning of the year (as they do), our revenues can look great in January but will tail off as the year unfolds. And, if we pay our entire property insurance policy for the year (which we did in January), our expense total could make it look like we are in trouble. On the other hand, if we pay ministry shares or missionaries only every three or four months (which we do), our expenses in January and February could look to be way below budget when, in fact, they are not. Fortunately, the deacons keep an eye on this and make the adjustments needed to allow us to say with confidence that our financial position is healthy as we near the end of the first quarter of the year.

And, as the Refresh work winds down and we reflect on our goal of fully paying for this

work within four years, we are also making some important accounting decisions that will keep us on the right track. One of the more important of these decisions involves trying to predict the percentage of Refresh giving that will come in via “as needed” versus designated gifts, because this affects how much should be transferred to the Building Fund from General Fund each month. In addition to our “repairs and maintenance budget, the deacons are currently transferring a total of \$2,500/month to the Building Fund (\$1,833/month toward our \$6,200 monthly goal for Refresh contributions and \$667/month to fund “other special projects”). This means that our “as needed” givers are still giving something to the Refresh Project, even though your contribution receipt may (only and correctly) indicate a gift to the “General Fund.” It also means we need $\$6,200 - \$1,833 = \$4,367$ in gifts designated to the Building Fund to meet the \$6,200/month needed to pay off the principal and interest on our loans within four years. Thankfully, designated Building Fund contributions averaged \$5,964/month in January and February, so we are more than keeping up with this goal.

In addition to healthy General Fund and Building Fund contributions, our members have continued to support Christian Education at healthy levels. And, because of the hard work and enthusiasm of the Coven-ANTs who

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Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/24-3/24/24) \$78,616	\$94,353	+\$15,737
Christian Education	(8/1/23-3/24/24) \$62,691	\$86,293	+\$23,602



As we prepare for our final 50th Anniversary Celebration Weekend, let's see what you know about the celebration to come! Here is one last set of questions before our final Anniversary Celebration Weekend:

1. How many members of Covenant have served on the 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee?
2. How many former ministers will be joining us to celebrate on April 26-28?
3. Approximately how many former members have indicated they will be attending our final celebration weekend?
4. How many people have signed up to attend our celebration dinner?
5. When will our updated history book be available?

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

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

- Q:** 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?
- A:** According to Lois Vander Zee, there are 1,230 pipes!

- Q:** How many contractors have been or will be involved in the sanctuary remodel?
- A:** There have been a total of 5 contractors:
- Schelling Construction has been responsible for the general construction work—building walls, the new stage and sound booth, and the finish trim work.
 - Ten Kredit Electric has been responsible for the installation of the new lighting system and the infrastructure needed for the new sound and video systems.
 - RDI is providing the new sound and video equipment and providing the set up and programming for these systems.
 - Van Muyden Painting did the texturing and painting in the sanctuary.
 - Furniture Mart will be providing and installing the new carpet at the platform, choir loft, and sound booth.

- Q:** How many new lights will be installed in the sanctuary?
- A:** There are 26 new downlights at the high lay in ceiling, 19 new downlights recessed in the sloped wood ceiling, 12 new downlights in the soffits at the north and south sides of the sanctuary, the 2 existing choir spotlights which are reused, and 6 theatrical spotlights used for highlighting the new platform space.
- Q:** How many sound system speakers will be installed?
- A:** There will be 2 new main speakers hung over the pulpit area, a fill speaker at the west side of the sanctuary, a fill speaker at the choir loft area, and the 3 existing speakers located on the south wall of the fellowship hall. So a total of 7 speakers will make up our system.

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Note from the Deacons

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planned and executed a greatly successful auction and monster salt sale (thank them if you see them), we are well ahead in the amounts needed to meet our commitments for the 2023-24 school year. Because of this, the deacons would like to encourage members to make a one-time gift to the Building Fund in lieu of one of their regular gifts to our Christian Education this spring so we can pay off the Refresh project ahead of schedule. For check writers this would require remembering to change the payee on one of your regular Christian Education checks; for Vanco givers, it means choosing the Building Fund option, and for “as needed” givers it means notifying the deacons that you approve us

applying the 20% of a gift ordinarily allocated to Christian Ed to the Building Fund. As is always the case, gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated because, as with volunteering at Covenant, widespread participation is a blessing to all.

Please give thanks with us for God’s continued blessings as reflected in the safety that was granted to the Refresh workers, the joy we are experiencing being back in our dedicated worship space, and our ongoing gratitude for the giving of Covenant members.

-John Visser

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

Did You Know?

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Q: How many projector screens will the sanctuary have?

A: The correct answer is zero. There will be 2 projectors used to project on the 2 new walls at the platform, but we are not planning on using screens. We have invested in high quality projection equipment and used a smooth finish on those walls with the intent of not installing dedicated screens. This was to try to have the projection enhance our worship without being a focal point.

From the Council

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After lunch the delegates gathered in smaller groups (two groups of ministers, two groups of elders, and two groups of deacons) to reflect on a set of questions (provided by the Classical Interim Committee) relating to their service as officebearers.

-Rev. Bernie Haan

Stated Clerk of Classis



Our Covenant kids performed beautifully in Unity Christian’s musical “Little House on the Prairie.” Covenant had NINE students in the cast! Pictured are Sevriena Postma, Corrie DeVries, Savannah Lief, Dylan Kramer, Louisa DeVries, and Eden Hawley. Not pictured are Elia Eppinga, Liam Clark, and Emma Haan.