

Look What We Made!

Have you noticed the new banner hanging in our sanctuary? This banner was born out of the WE service from this past February when we learned about the faith practice of celebration and practiced celebrating together as a church. If you attended, you might especially remember that this was the service when we attempted to show off our dancing skills as a church family (which maybe needed a little work???) and we made ice cream sundaes to celebrate our church's 50th birthday!

One of the activities we took part in during that service was sharing at our tables something we were each celebrating—something that brought us joy, something we were looking forward to, something we accomplished, something we saw that reminded us of God's goodness. To signify that we each had something worth celebrating, we created these trees of life quilt squares. Young and old, we glued leaves and shapes—symbols of our celebrations—onto the trees, and while we glued, we sang, "...with every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God."

And now Tricia Kok has taken all these squares and made something beautiful out of them—a quilt which can adorn our sanctuary and remind us of God's goodness and faithfulness in the lives of his people. And may it remind us too that it is a good faith practice to celebrate together and to testify to each other that the Lord is good.

Big thanks to Tricia for taking what we started that day and using her sewing skills to make this beautiful banner for our sanctuary!

We encourage you to wander up to the front on Sunday and take a closer look!

Sound Advice: How to Hold a Microphone

The sound crew is thrilled with our newly upgraded sound system, and we want to share some tips to make our voices shine even brighter! We'll offer some "sound advice" to help everyone get the best possible audio quality in our worship services and other events.

This Month's Tip: Holding a Microphone



Illustration: Correctly holding a handheld microphone

Whether you're sharing during prayer time or making an announcement, knowing how to hold a microphone can make a world of difference. It might seem simple, but many people make common mistakes. Here's how to get it right:

The Perfect Microphone Hold

- **Angle and Distance:** Hold the mic at a 30 to 45-degree angle from horizontal, aimed at your lower lip, about four inches away.
- **Natural Grip:** Keep the grip natural and relaxed. Fingers, including your thumb, should gently wrap around the handle of

the microphone. Avoid touching the wind-screen with your fingers or thumb.

- **Breath Avoidance:** Think of the mic as a flashlight—shine the "light" up from below and onto your lower lip. By sending your breath over the top of the microphone you avoid unnatural pops and hisses from "P", "B", "S", and "T" sounds.
- **Avoid the Belly:** Don't hold the mic vertically against your belly. It won't pick up your voice well and might even catch some belly noises!
- **Side Speaking:** Speaking into the side of the mic? Not effective! The mic is designed to pick up sound from the front.



Illustration: Side-speaking is not effective. Think of the microphone as a flashlight. It should be aimed to light up your lower lip!

Remember, just like you wouldn't pinch your nose while talking (unless you want to sound like Donald Duck), don't cover the mic's wind-screen with your hand or fingers. Let it breathe!

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Raise the Roof & Refresh: Where Do We Stand Financially?

Approximately 20 years ago, the asbestos removal estimates for our building approached \$1 million! Onerous regulations and primitive removal techniques generated an overwhelming cost that had some folks thinking it might be time to abandon the building.

Fortunately, this was a good time to “kick the can down the road”. Last year, a new roof meeting current asbestos mitigation standards was installed for \$162,000. The full cost was paid in cash by our membership in 2023 with enough left over to install new gutters, repair water damage to the organ and construct a new slant roof section to prevent damage to the organ in the future.

We are all enjoying the additional building

functionality and efficiency that the Refresh modifications have giving us. You’ve probably noticed that we have taken a more patient approach paying for this second phase of our building project. Total costs, including rent expense at SCCS came to \$281,075, very near what we budgeted in the spring of 2023. Contributions in 2024 have reduced our outstanding debt to \$215,000—all of which is owed to members of our church family at 5% interest.

The Deacons have budgeted monthly payments of \$6,200 which should pay all costs, including interest, by the summer of 2027. The Refresh Fundraising Committee thanks you for your generous and ongoing support!

*-Paul Clousing, Verlyn De Wit, Terry Friend,
Daryl Hilma, Ron Oostra, Don Ten Napel,
John Visser, Val Zonnefeld*

Sound Advice

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By following these simple tips, you'll help ensure that our voices are clear and the sound is top-notch.

Look for more "Sound Advice" next month on using stand-mounted microphones!

If you have topics relative to technology at Covenant Church that you would like discussed in future issues of the Courier, you may send your ideas to Douglas.DeBoer@Dordt.edu

-Doug DeBoer



Mark your calendars for the 8th annual Pork 'N Bands event at The Fruited Plain Café. In addition to being a great night of food and music and community, this event helps to raise money for our Christian Education Fund! Watch for more information in the coming weeks.

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



thank you

Covenant family—
Our hearts are full of gratitude in receiving Covenant's generous gift. Dealing with Dan's health issues as well as losing our home and most of our possessions continues to be a difficult journey. However, we walk in faith and trust in a good God who provides for our needs. We thank God for the love and prayers of the community of believers who walk with us. We covet your prayers for many who are trying to navigate life with its uncertainty and grieving much loss, yet with hope.

Again—our sincere thanks and love.

-Pastor Dan & Mary DeGroot

Dear Covenant,
Thank you for your many expressions of support during Herm's illness and death. And we love the hydrangea shrub—it's beautiful! It will always remind me and the boys of your love.

In Christ,
-Dee Van Nijejenhuis and family

September Scheduling



Greeters

Marcy H, Mark MC, Sherri TN



Ushers

Paul C, Sharon D, Trena VW



Coffee Servers

Wil A, Joan MC, Stan VB,
Marty VP, Dani W

Substitutes

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

Sarah H, Jeremy H, Sally J,
Dennis VP, Kris VP, Jake VW

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 23** for the October issue.



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Merrill MC

September 1

AM Nick & Jenni B, Tricia K

September 8

AM Jason & Sara H, Mark & Lisa C

September 15

AM Andy & Rachel L, Doug & Marge DB

September 22

AM Channon & Joni V, Laura J

September 29

AM Jose & Isabel C, Barb T

October 6

AM Mark & Cheri H, Luke & Sarah H

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

September 1: Vespers

September 8: Joint CRC Worship Service
(at Faith CRC)

September 15: Vespers

September 22: Vespers

September 29: Vespers with Communion

Serving at Covenant

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

This summer was not typical for the Mission & Outreach committee. Usually, we host missionaries on home leave and plan ahead for the coming year, but since all of our supported missionaries visited us last summer, none were around this year.

What we did do this summer was a lot of disaster volunteering and organizing volunteer workers. We would like to thank those who spent time working to clean out and rebuild Jim and Barb Schaap’s house in Alton on the Floyd River. When I stand in their back yard and look out over the valley, I still find it hard to believe how much water there must have been that day overflowing the banks. Also, thanks to those who volunteered in Rock Valley. I believe we had members who worked at the church and school and at Hope Haven in addition to helping out any friends and family. I did a lot of laundry for friends of ours and I’m sure there are more stories of loving

helping hands. Our church used compassion funds to assist those who had to quickly replace damaged utilities and appliances and do other critical repairs related to this and other natural disasters, so thanks for your generous giving.

Looking forward, we are expecting World Renew to start calling for and assigning volunteers to tackle rebuilding projects in Rock Valley and Hawarden and beyond. As soon as we hear from them, we will let you know what is needed.

We also hope to plan and host a neighborhood picnic this fall as a way to introduce ourselves to any new residents in the neighborhood and get back in touch with others.

-Dwight Van Tol

On behalf of the M&O Committee

And a quick related note from the deacons: We encourage people to continue to contribute to the Compassion Fund if you want to encourage the deacons to aid flood victims— simply note on the memo line that your contribution is for "flood relief."

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/24-8/18/24) \$216,195	\$228,497	+\$12,302
Christian Education	(8/1/24-8/18/24) \$5,532	\$2,501	-\$3,031
Refresh Building	(1/1/24-8/18/24) \$47,215	\$53,153	+\$5,937

** 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. This number also doesn't include carryover from this past fiscal year so we're in better shape than is reflected here. Hopefully next month's numbers will be more accurate!*

Prayers for Labor Day (and Every Day)

Some of you may remember the “Work and Worship” gathering at the Fruited Plain on Labor Day last year—an evening of song and prayer with members of Good Shepherd Church when we focused on the connection between our worship and our day-to-day work. Printed below are a few of the prayers that were spoken on that Labor Day and are worth repeating as we reflect on our lives of work and worship each day.

A Prayer of Embodied Surrender

Great Father, Compassionate Son, Inspiring Spirit,

whose marvelous work is so different from our own and yet—by your mercy—akin to ours. You have made all things, you have redeemed us, you direct our ways. These truths turn our entire selves to worship, but they also call us to work—creating, redeeming, transforming.

Indeed, “You know what’s best for us.” James reminds us that our bodies—our tongues—both praise and curse, which he tells us should not be.

May our hands, which handle your body and blood, but also grasp at so many distractions, be sanctified for our daily work.

May our feet, which seek your paths but also wander, be equipped to support the daily tasks put before us, sustaining us in our work and in our pathways of compassion and relationship.

May our eyes and ears, which see your body and hear your word, but which habitually turn us from you, help us to see and hear the

needs of those around us. Preserve our sight and hearing—all our senses, really—so that they may teach us about your world and enable our worship and work.

And may our tongues, which taste your fruit, not only remind us of the bitter fruit of your passion but be touched, like Isaiah’s, to speak your gospel, especially in the everyday words that are our daily tasks.

Let us rest in the truth that “whatever comes today” already belongs to you—to your hands and feet and heart.

In the name of our Triune God, Amen.

-Bob DeSmith

For us all as we celebrate Labor Day and the beginning of a new season:

O God, Creator of Word and world and work, we thank you for our minds, hearts, and hands. May we use the gifts you have given us to be your ambassadors in a lost and lonely world, to help and heal, create and cultivate, and fill the earth with good things.

Bless the work of our hands.

Be with the students going back to school. As they learn all about your diverse creation, may they also learn to love their neighbors as themselves. Give them the courage to be kind. Open their hearts and minds to all you would teach them.

Bless this season of learning and growing.

Be with those who stay at home. In the quiet

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On Sunday, September 8 our 2024-2025 Sunday School year will begin. We are thankful to have a great group of teachers willing to lead this year.

Grades 1 & 2: Marcy Holwerda and Andrea Dieleman
Grades 3 & 4: Jenny Breems and Lisa Christians
Grades 5 & 6: Jeremy Hummel and Joya Breems
Grades 7 & 8: Steve Crull
Grades 9 & 10: Dave Schelhaas
Grades 11 & 12: Pastor Joel

Grades 1-6 will start their Sunday School hour with singing in the church basement and grades 7-12 may head right to their classrooms. Please reach out if you have any questions.

-Megan Haan

Sunday School Coordinator



To kick off the beginning of the school year, you're invited to an all church picnic at Children's Park on Sunday, September 15!

The food will be inside and there's plenty of indoor seating too, but feel free to bring your blankets and lawn chairs if you want to enjoy the great outdoors!

Please bring a main dish and a side to share as well as tableware for your family. Tableware will be provided for college students and guests!

Prayers for Labor Day

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work of dish soap and diapers, cooking and cleaning, may they know the holiness of each task. You are in the quiet days, the simple service that is often overlooked.

Bless the sacred ordinary.

Be with all who are employed. Thank you for the gift of gainful work, a way to provide for themselves and their families. May they find joy and meaning in their calling, and use their

efforts to edify this community and beyond.
Bless our service.

O God, we lift unholy hands and ask for the grace of your redemptive touch. Take our humble offering of work in every season and use it to bring light and life to your world. Make our every moment holy.

Bless this offering we pray. Amen.

-Nicole Baart