

# Prairie Worship & Wonder



## Pastoral Group Dinner Schedule



October 13—DeSmith/Van Tol  
October 20—Hickey/Haan  
October 27—Breems/Kramer  
November 3—DeWit/DeJong  
November 10—Stiemsma/Zonnefeld  
November 17—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/](https://covenantcrc.net/directory-committees/)

Courier

October 2024

COVENANT  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

# Hope Food Pantry Volunteer Reflections



At the beginning of September, I volunteered at the Hope Food Pantry.

During my 2-hour shift, I loaded hundreds of boxes of food into cars of the recipients and interacted with a different side of Sioux Center than I normally see. This opportunity reminded me of the needs that are often hidden in our community, and of the important work of the church in fostering relationships with needy people.

From trying to remember the Spanish word for cucumber (*pepino*) to struggling with the variety of latches different car models use to open their trunks, this experience stretched me mentally, physically, and spiritually. I was struck by the word “Hope” so aptly included in the name of the food pantry. Some recipients seemed hopeless and ashamed, not wanting to make eye contact with us and speeding away quickly after we loaded their boxes. Others, seemingly regulars at the food pantry, greeted the volunteers I was working with by name, and joked back and forth about how the food pantry had already run out of laundry soap, which is apparently a hot commodity. There was hope, coexisting alongside whatever unknown darkneses each family was facing.

Located off Highway 75 at the old Kosgrove Estates property, The Hope Food Pantry is a volunteer-based non-profit that provides food and hygiene supplies to the needy in our community. The Food Pantry shares a campus with Whispers of Love, Hope, and Joy, another local ministry that provides healing and safety to families escaping domestic violence.

As a member of Covenant’s Justice and Mercy

Committee, I’ve had both the Hope Food Pantry and Whispers of Love, Hope, and Joy on my mind for a while. The Justice and Mercy committee has been working to connect our congregation with local ministry opportunities, including both volunteering at the Hope Food Pantry and tending a community garden with Whispers of Love, Hope, and Joy. Our commitment to send volunteers to the Hope Food Pantry stems from the mission of the Justice and Mercy Committee to respond concretely to needs in our community and to interact and hear stories from other community members and organizations engaged in justice work.

Throughout the summer, Covenant volunteered to staff one Wednesday food distribution a month. Over 20 members of our congregation, ranging from grade school to retirement gave up their Wednesday afternoons to volunteer.

Here’s what other congregation members experienced:

“I was honored to be able to volunteer with our church at the Hope Food Pantry. Seeing the families come through to pick up food was important to me as I’m not sure I think enough about how many families rely on ministries like this for food and other household items and clothing. I feel this is a great way for our church to get involved with a community ministry that takes us out of our normal circles and directly impacts the people we live with in our community.”

—Lisa Christians

“I would highly recommend others volunteer at the Hope Food Pantry. It is a wonderful

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## Hope Food Pantry Volunteer Reflections

(Continued from page 2)

ministry that is working to meet the needs of many people in our area. Without churches and volunteers, a ministry like Hope Food Pantry may not be able to thrive or even exist.”

—Mark Christians

“I think something like this can really awaken our awareness of need in many areas and remind us to always be looking for ways to answer the call and instructions from Jesus.”

—Mary Ploegstra

“I had no idea so many people needed this kind of help. I’m glad I got to do this.”

—Naomi Ploegstra

“The generosity of the people who donated food really impressed me. The people who are volunteers are very nice.”

—Lydia Clark

“Volunteering made me see another side to Sioux Center—there was a consistent line-up of vehicles to receive food, and I knew very few of the faces. I used my limited Spanish (and wished I had some Ukrainian language in my wheelhouse) to ask about add-ons that we had to give away. It is a wonderful ministry, and I am so grateful to the weekly interpreters/volunteers who give their time regularly. I’d definitely recommend volunteering.”

—Ruth Clark

“We were amazed by the scope of this ministry and the amounts of food available for distribution as well as clothing and other goods. By signing up for a 2 hour shift we encountered needy people that we do not normally encounter in our community. It was a truly rewarding experience.”

—Deb and Daryl Hibma

“I was surprised at how much was included in the food bundles and by how many people used the services. I think it is important for churches to be involved in local ministry, as it gives us an opportunity to be Christ's hands and feet to our fellow neighbors.”

—Kris VanderPlaats

Although Covenant isn’t organizing specific days we will send volunteers, we would still encourage all members in our congregation to support the Food Pantry in whichever ways they can. To sign up for an individual volunteer slot visit the [Hope Food Pantry volunteer signup link](#). Or support the Hope Food Pantry through prayer, financial, or item donations. You can see a list of the most needed items or make a monetary donation [here](#).

The Justice and Mercy Committee is committed to connecting our congregation to local opportunities to engage in justice work. To sign up for the Justice and Mercy email list, with local volunteering opportunities, [fill out this form](#).

*Jaya Breems*

## Communion Reminder

Just a quick reminder: before you stand up to walk forward for communion each Sunday, can you take minute to quickly look at the floor around you? Is there a purse strap that someone might trip on? Could you slide your coffee mug forward under the chair ahead of you so it doesn’t get kicked over? Did your kids leave a toy or crayons on the floor that could be put away? If everyone could make sure everything is safely tucked under the seat ahead of you or off the floor, it will help all of us safely navigate our way through the rows as we walk forward! Thank you!

# October Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Judah Hawley	18	Pam DeJong Cora Donahue	25	Layne Vos
2	Ethan Brue Ava Landman	19	Pat Crull Laura Janssen Tammy Lief	27	Dave & Emily Kramer
5	Ed Brummel	20	Esther Eppinga	28	Julia Kramer
6	Elijah Schreurs	23	Nola Jewett	29	Nick Breems Jonathan Van Tol
9	Kara Maletoungou Samuel Maletoungou Ed & Natalie Brummel	24	Sophia Bailey Lydia Clark Marv Wielard	30	Emilyn Smit
15	Mark Horstman				



## Serving at Covenant

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

Most Saturday mornings you can find me sitting in the local coffee shop deep in discussion about something with my community neighbors. Sharing a cup of coffee (or tea) is an easy way to start a conversation with your neighbors. Global Coffee Break is a Resonate Global Mission program that writes, prints, and distributes short easy bible study materials for Christians to share with their neighbors around the world in a casual setting over a cuppa. If you are interested in contributing to the effort to translate Coffee Break materials into more languages, there is currently a matching gift opportunity through November 30. You can find flyers, giving slips, and envelopes on the table in the fellowship hall.

*-Dwight Van Tol*

On behalf of the M&O Committee

## Senior Needs Update

The Senior Needs Committee has been active and busy. We provide valet service on Sundays, we have provided many rides to appointments, we have visited the sick and shut-ins, and most recently, we arranged for and packed up Pat Eggebeen and her belongings and got them safely to her new home in Missouri. A huge thanks to those who collected boxes and then packed those boxes and taped them shut, and those that put them and her furniture in the trailer (on the hottest day of the summer!), and those who drove her and her car, and those who drove the trailer. It was a beautiful operation and went so smoothly. Thank you, everyone! We have a great congregation of willing and gifted volunteers.

Please let us know if there are needs where we can be of help. We are seniors and we want to help seniors. (But I don't think you absolutely have to be a senior!) If you need help you can always ask!

*-Mary Ploegstra*

On behalf of the Senior Needs Committee

# October Scheduling



## Greeters

Natalie B, Tricia K, John Z



## Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Rose Postma



## Ushers

Marge DB, Dennis DJ, Daryl H



## Coffee Servers

Luke H, Kristi H, Jeri S,  
Linda V, Kurt V

## Substitutes

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

Jo A, Jan B, Verlyn DW,  
Andy L, Del VZ, Joni 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, **October 21** for the November issue.

## October 6

AM Mark & Cheri H, Luke & Sarah H

## October 13

AM Ryan & Val Z, Ron & Carol O

## October 20

AM Marty & Kris VP, Marcy H

## October 27

AM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Jeff & Sara P

## November 3

AM Jason & Dani W, Chris & Rin G

## Formation Sunday Evenings

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

October 6: Vespers

October 13: Edifying Engagement

October 20: Vespers

October 27: Vespers with Communion

# Notes from the Deacons

## Beards and Blessings

In Leviticus 19:9, we read: “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your fields or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and foreigner. I am the Lord your God.” Later in the same chapter in verse 27 men are told to “not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.”

How are facial hair and Christian stewardship of our earnings related, you may ask? In Leviticus, the flourishing of God’s people is related to the flourishing of the land. There are many guidelines to encourage holy living and to establish relationships with God, neighbor, and land. Land was (and here in Iowa we can see how it still is) the source of livelihood. A good harvest was necessary to sustain family and community. In the Hebrew scriptures land is often used as a metaphor for humanity.

Ellen Davis writes this in her book *Opening Israel’s Scriptures*:

In Leviticus 19:9 and 19:27 the same Hebrew word for ‘edge-growth’ is used to refer to both land and humans. Yahweh instructs the people to ensure the poor and hungry are

fed by leaving an edge of growth around their fields to enable sojourners to glean freely. Interestingly, the same word emerges in an instruction for men not to round off the edge of growth on their heads or spoil the edge of growth on their beards. It is as if what is supposed to happen on the land is mirrored in the farmer’s face. As a farmer rubs his hands across his rough, bristly chin, it serves as a reminder to leave an edge of growth for the poor. Intentional uncropped facial hair serves as a mirror to uncropped land that he “may be reminded of the peculiar mystery of their shared existence, their interdependency and common dependence on the grace of God” (Davis, 2019, 77).

Rather than viewing a beard as a symbol of masculine self-worth, we should view our bodies in relation to our position as image bearers and stewards in this world. Instead of using our income to present an outward show of our self-image, it should be a signal to care for others, derived from the deep love and care coming from our Maker. The words from Leviticus are a timely call to inhabit love for God, ourselves, our neighbor, and our land more faithfully and to use one’s God-given gifts to protect the vulnerable.

Sourced from *Du Mez Connections*, October 10, 2022

-Dwight Van Tol

## Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/24-9/22/24) \$248,952	\$256,425	+\$7,473
Christian Education	(8/1/24-9/22/24) \$7,783	\$21,070	+\$13,287
Refresh Building	(1/1/24-9/22/24) \$54,369	\$62,612	+\$8,243

# Sound Advice: Speaking at a Lectern

When speaking at a lectern, should you adjust the microphone's aim?

You may be asked to read the Bible, lead a responsive reading, or explain how the offerings are used. You will likely do this from the lectern, speaking into a microphone mounted on a stand. If the microphone looks poorly aimed, should you reach out and adjust it?

Adjusting the microphone could create handling noise which may distract the congregation's attention from your message to the microphone. Is the possible distraction worth it? If the microphone looks badly aimed, how could it be worse if you make a helpful tweak? What if the microphone falls out of its clip and you now have to try to figure out how to reattach it?


A lectern's mic stand should hold it chest-high and it should be aimed nearly horizontal or tipped up just slightly and aimed at your lower neck, not your mouth! This way, if you step

back from the lectern, you also reduce the angle of your mouth to the microphone, which keeps the volume level uniform even as you naturally move around. It also keeps the microphone below your face so the congregation can see you. It allows the microphone to be far enough away from you so it doesn't obstruct sight of your notes. The mic can be set and aimed quite a bit lower than ideal and still work well because the sound operator can add gain to make up for a low aim.

In contrast, if you aim the microphone yourself, you may walk up close to the lectern and then be tempted to aim the microphone at your eyes, because that looks right. Then, as you back a step or so from the lectern and start speaking, the microphone will now be aimed at your forehead or even clear over your head. Now the microphone is focused on picking up room reverberation and feedback from the wall behind you. The sound operator can't correct well for the bad aim because the mic is picking up too much feedback.

Should you adjust the microphone before speaking? Probably not. Minor tweaks are not worth the risk. Hopefully the sound operator has set the microphone reasonably well. Even if the aim doesn't look perfect, the risk of creating distraction is usually not worth it. If you can come before the service for a sound check, you can ensure that the microphone is set for your height and voice. That's the best time to make adjustments. The smooth flow of the worship service is important to maintaining the congregation's focus.

*This article is the second in a series on how we can best use our new sound system. Last month I gave tips for holding a microphone. Next month I'll discuss hearing assistance.*



**Grandma Alert!**  
**Grandpa Alert!**



Doug and Marge De Boer welcomed their 4th great-grandchild on September 14. Elliott Glenn Kroese is the son of Marcus and Megan Kroese from Doon, and weighed 6 pounds. Baby and family are all doing well.

*-Doug & Marge DeBoer*

*-Doug DeBoer*

# Pork 'N Bands

The 8th annual Pork 'N Bands took place on Saturday, September 14. It was a beautiful day with mild temperatures, a few passing clouds, and a light breeze. The pork was delicious and we thank Dave Kramer, Robbin Eppinga, Ryan De Kruyf, and Marty Vander Plaats for smoking it for us again this year. We also want to thank all those who donated food, volunteered, and came to enjoy the food and music. We were able to raise approximately \$3,600 while building community.

There was a slight change in the planning of Pork 'N Bands this year. Previously, the entire Christian Education Fundraising Committee would plan each event. However, that was causing some burn-out. It was decided to divide up the committee into groups of 2-3 to plan each fundraiser. Other members of the committee would be called on to help if needed. This change worked out well. Pork 'N Bands has been going on for enough years now that everything was pretty much in place with excellent notes to follow from previous years.

Thanks for helping make this event a success!

*-Sarah Hawley & Kris Vander Plaats*

Pork 'N Bands Committee

