



Check out these hard working youth group kids! They served a great lasagna dinner before the congregational meeting! And thanks to our youth group leaders, the fearless Nick Breems and Carlene Van Schouwen, for keeping them on task and for leading and loving them so well.





Courier
January 2026
COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

the January Series



19 Monday

REV. NAOMI TUTU

Our Shared Humanity: Creating Understanding Through the Principles of MLK



20 Tuesday

KAITLIN CURTICE

Journeying with Story



21 Wednesday

MAJORA CARTER

Developing Healthy, Equitable Cities for All



22 Thursday

DR. VIVEK MURTHY

Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World



23 Friday

HARRY SMITH

Less is more. More or less.



26 Monday

DAVID BROOKS

The Path to Cultural Repair



27 Tuesday

DR. SAMANTHA NUTT

Conflicted? The World of War



28 Wednesday

WU MAN

The Pipa—A Musical Bridge Between Cultures



29 Thursday

TOM MEDEMA

America at 250: How Our National Parks Inspire a More Perfect Union

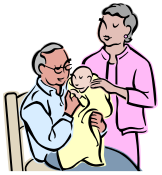


30 Friday

SABRINA LITTLE

Sports as a Laboratory for Virtue

We invite you to take your lunch break at Covenant in January! We will again be a remote site for Calvin's *January Series*, and we invite you to come each weekday for two weeks in January to learn from a variety of prominent academics, educators, artists, activists, and others who will present thought-provoking lectures in their areas of expertise. Lectures take place from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM CST.



Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!



Bob and Rebecca De Smith are excited to welcome BellaRose into our family through adoption. We were thrilled to join her parents, Nathan and Rachel (De Smith) Roberts, for her adoption ceremony on November 24. BellaRose is an energetic, creative 6 year old. We are so glad that she is part of our family!

-Bob & Rebecca DeSmith



A Christmas surprise! On December 3, Gidge Meyer was blessed with a great granddaughter, Emersyn Anne Meyer, who weighed in at 5lbs 13 oz. Emy is small but "mighty" and the first girl born into the Meyer family after two generations of boys. The parents are Ezra and Morgan Meyer from Spencer, Iowa. So thankful for this special gift in our family!

-Gidge Meyer

From the Justice & Mercy Committee

On December 8, fifteen members and friends of Covenant's Justice and Mercy Committee had the privilege of attending a banquet put on by Sioux Center's Immigrant Connection branch to learn more about their service to our community.

While dining on delicious fajitas and flan and sipping horchata, we heard from Jason Lief, Site Director, and Yolanda and Makayla, Department of Justice Accredited Legal Representatives, about how they capably and patiently work to provide low cost, high quality immigration legal services in the area. Maria Magdalena Reformed Church houses a new office on their top floor for Yolanda and Makayla, both of whom are bilingual, to meet with clients and attend to their growing workload. They are grateful to be part of the Immigrant Connection network, as there are several branches in the nation that work together and support one another. The difference they are making in helping immigrants sift through the legal red tape is tangible.

If you would like to know more, or know of someone who could benefit from the expertise they have to offer, please visit their website at www.iclegal.org/siouxcenter or contact a member of the Justice and Mercy Committee.

-Shannon Schreurs

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



Upcoming Holiday Worship

Candlelight Vespers

Sunday, December 21 | 6:00 PM

A time for scripture and carols and, as is tradition, we'll end the service with candles and singing around the sanctuary.



Christmas Morning Worship

Thursday, December 25 | 10:00 AM

A time of celebration of Christ's birth. We will end the service with the "Hallelujah Chorus" so get your voices ready!



New Year's Eve Worship

Wednesday, December 31 | 6:00 PM

A time as a church to reflect on the year behind us and look ahead to the year to come as we praise God for his presence with us through all time.

January Scheduling



Valet

Micah M



Greeters

Lisa C, Len R, Lila S



Ushers

Sharon D, Beth VB, John Z



Coffee Servers

Ruth C, Mary D, Sarah H,
Jason H, Daniel VS



Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Courtney R

January 4
AM Ryan & Val Z, Micah & Jayden D

January 11
AM Mark & Cheri H, Lee & Jenni M

January 18
AM Chris & Rin G, Juliet J

January 25
AM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Duane & Jan B

February 1
AM Michael & Adi VP, Jeremy & Kristi H

Substitutes

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

Wil A, Jenni B, Cheri H,
Dave S, Adeline VP, 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, **January 19** for the February issue.

Formation Sunday Evenings

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

January 4: Vespers

January 11: WE Service

January 18: Cadet Sunday at Covenant

January 25: Edifying Engagement: Sam Eppinga & Beatrice Shackelford

Note from the Deacons

168 Chickens!

Kids, remember your noisy Peter Fish? They swallowed enough coins ($506.70) to give your neighbors around the world 168 chickens (or 46 ducks, or 10 goats)! Thank you for sharing. And, if you would like other giving ideas, check out the World Renew Gift Catalog at https://worldrenew.net/shop.



Covenant givers, remember your Thanksgiving Offerings? Together, they totaled about $14,200 for 15 local causes. The top 3 causes were (1) Hope Food Pantry ($2,415); (2) Family Crisis Center ($2,180); and (3) PLIA ($1,595). If you would like to give an additional gift (or series of gifts) to a local cause, ask a Deacon for further instructions.

Thank you for participating in these opportunities for intentional generosity. Let's continue to spur each other on "to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." (1 Timothy 6:18)

-Micah Schreurs

For the Covenant Deacons
(Kyle Dieleman, Mark Horstman, Dave Kramer, Lee Mellema, Micah Schreurs, Atul Shinde, Josh Van Schouwen, Val Zonnefeld)

The Auction is Coming...

Hey Bidder, Bidder, it's Auction Time! Save the date of Friday, February 20 for a night of fellowship, fundraising, and auction fun as Covenant hosts its Biannual Christian Education Auction.

It's a great time to start thinking about what you will donate. Is it a supper, an experience, or a service? Are you baker, artist, or woodworker? Do you have an idea for a themed basket? Let your creative juices flow.



-Val Zonnefeld

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/25-12/14/25) $332,431	$326,438	-$5,993
Christian Education	(8/1/25-12/14/25) $48,654	$45,835	-$2,819
Refresh Building	(1/1/25-12/14/25) $71,538	$71,243	-$296



Grateful for God's Gracious Hand + YOU

Speaking into places of pain and harm can feel overwhelming at times. But there is no greater work than to declare and create opportunities for God's truth and healing to be known and experienced. Your prayers are a vital part of God at work. We thank you for the ways you pray for and contribute to the work we get to do on the ground in South Africa. It is such a gift to belong to the family of God, each contributing to building the Kingdom in the unique ways God has gifted us!

We haven't been faithful with the prayer WhatsApp group since we returned from the US in August, but we will be starting that up again soon. If you'd like to join our prayer WhatsApp group, download the app and send Megan a message at +27697807123 so she can add you.

We are so grateful for the increased financial support we received during our visit over the summer. God's hand moved your hearts towards incredible generosity. 20 new people joined our missionary support team and a number of churches increased their support. We cannot do the work that God has called us to without your generosity. We are so grateful! This is a time of year when many prayerfully consider year-end giving. If you sense God guiding you to join us in shared mission and would like to join our missionary support team, you can give here. Once you click the link, you will land on our Resonate page. Scroll down to the blue box to find "please select" where you will select "Missionaries Africa." "Choose a missionary" box will appear where you can scroll down to find our name.

With hearts full of gratitude,

-Mike and Megan Ribbens

Prayer Requests:
Here are just a few ways to pray for the Ribbens as they serve in South Africa:

- VISA: A year ago Megan appealed the rejection on her visa renewal. We are still waiting for the outcome. Please pray that God gives us favor with her visa.
- Amira: God provided a job for Amira at Corewell Health, a 5 minute walk from our home in GR. We are so thankful. Please pray that God helps her find Christian community to encourage and grow her.
- Nico: Nico has had a great start at Calvin Uni. He's made good friends, is loving the education, and is enjoying his job as a line cook at Roam, a global street food cafe. Please pray that God continues to meet him as he adjusts to culture and through the moments of missing home. We are thankful Amira and Nico will be together over Christmas.
- Megan's Health: For the majority of the year, Megan's health was so much improved that we thought her body had finally fully healed, but the last two months she's experienced a lot of pain in her abdomen again. Please pray that God helps us find answers and brings healing to her body.

Poetry for the Season...

An Advent Poem

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
still nothing is as shining as it should be
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an
uproar of mice – it is the season of their
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves
and through the walls the squirrels
have gnawed their ragged entrances – but it the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard
while the dog snores, the cat holds the pillow;
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up the path, to the door. And I still believe you will
come, Lord; you will, when I speak to the fox,
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know
that I am really speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

-Mary Oliver

A New Year's Poem

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rimes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

-Alfred Lord Tennyson