Update and Encouragement

Dear Friend in Christ,

In terms of "Update," I can share that Tricia and I have experienced our Lord's blessings as we have settled into our new home. And in terms of "Encouragement," I can share that a little over an hour ago I returned from another conversation with someone who feels grateful for their time at Covenant CRC in Sioux Center.

Now in terms of "another conversation," I can share that I have spoken with various people who have expressed gratitude for Covenant, even though they have moved away to another place. And one theme that has emerged from those conversations is that these people feel grateful for a community in which they experienced mutual respect even amid various differences. In other words, rather than needing to hide their views, they could ask honest questions or express debated perspectives without fearing rejection or condemnation. And they did so understanding that we need wisdom from the Holy Spirit regarding when to speak and when to keep silent. In other words, we seek to "tame the tongue," rather than "curse people who are made in the likeness of God," as our Lord puts it in James 3:8-9. So perhaps we can sum up that encouraging congregational practice of mutual respect by pondering the Apostle Paul calling us to "accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:7)

And friend, to add a bit more regarding "Update," I can share that Tricia and I feel grateful to come alongside her mother, Hazel Timmer, on Sunday after Sunday for worship and fellowship. Tricia comes alongside her 93 year old mother in all kinds of helpful and loving ways, and even with that priority, she has begun to play pickleball week after week. My right knee prevents me from playing pickleball, but I've been able to take some walks with Tricia by Lake Michigan and other beautiful places around here. And, to conclude, we've been able to spend more time with our daughter Sarah, the Hospice Chaplain in Cleveland Ohio.

So Tricia and I feel grateful for our Lord's blessings here and now, and at the same time we continue to feel grateful for our blessed years at Covenant.

-Joel Kok

Courier
September 2026
COVENANT
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

UPCOMING

Monday, September 7

Labor Day Worship Gathering
All are invited to a night of singing and praying on the theme of Work and Worship co-hosted by Covenant and Good Shepherd Church. We'll sing songs from The Porter's Gate songwriting collective's album *Worship for Workers* and spend time in prayer for our city and county and the work and workers here. The event begins at 7:00 PM at the Fruited Plain Cafe. This night of worship coincides nicely with the "At Work in the Garden" conference coming up at Dordt September 17-19. The Porter's Gate will be at the conference and will lead a worship-concert on Friday night.

Sunday, September 13

Sunday School Begins!
Students in grades 1-12 begin class at 9:00 AM. Come ready to learn! (Covenant Sunday Morning for adults will begin September 20!)

All Church Picnic
Join us for a potluck picnic at Children's Park! Bring a hot and cold dish to share, table service, and chairs or a blanket if you want to sit outside. Drinks will be provided. Head over to the park around 12:00ish and we'll eat around 12:15 PM.

Saturday, September 19

Pork 'N Bands

Covenant will once again provide the pork for the annual Pork 'N Bands event at The Fruited Plain Café. This pulled pork meal is a fundraiser for our Christian Education Fund. Watch for opportunities to sign up to bring food and to volunteer to serve at this event. A few details:

- Music begins at 4:00.
- We'll start serving food at 5:00.

Come out to enjoy some good music, to support local bands, and to enjoy some great food from some of our gifted meat-smokers!

Sunday, September 27

Our World Belongs to God Worship Gathering

We will gather for a service of worship and reflection at 6:00 PM in which we will read the opening sections—Creation, Fall, Redemption—from "Our World Belongs to God." Since its adoption by the CRC as a contemporary testimony, Covenant has used these beautiful words in worship as affirmations of faith, assurances of pardon, and words to take with us into our weeks; our children have studied OWBTG in catechism, and our Council has included sections in mission and worship statements. This service will be the first of three services where we will read through OWBTG. And we hope you will also consider staying after the service to share some food and fellowship. Watch for more information to come!

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

4	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	29	Levi Landman
9	Doug DeBoer		Viola Stiemsma Amanda Vande Brake	30	JoyLyn Garcia
10	Tony Garcia	25	Rachel Hibma		
15	Adam Kramer		Becky Stevenson		
19	Charlie Wyenberg	26	Morgan Hummel		

Remember in prayer

Please remember in prayer and visits Covenant members who are often unable to worship with us because of health concerns and those living in care facilities: Carol Apol, Ed Dengler, George Faber, Rachel Hibma, Joan McCarthy, Marilyn Mouw, Lee Plasier.

thank you

The table has been cleared of donated shoes and socks for some time, but we received this note and wanted to pass it along to the congregation:

On behalf of Love INC Sioux County, we wanted to say THANK YOU for your generosity in helping with our Heart & Soles Ministry. We appreciate your church displaying the shoe/sock cut outs and all who donated items or gave financially.

Thank you for your support!

-Danica Lynn
Love In the Name of Christ
Ministry Coordinator

September Scheduling

Valet

Jeff/Shirley Taylor

Greeters

Sherri TN, Jason VB, Laurey Z

Ushers

Rachel L, Lee M, Marcia W

Coffee Servers

Wil A, Lisa C, Claire H,
Len R, Dave S, Beth VB

Substitutes

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

Sharon D, Sarah H, Jason H,
Cheri H, Linda V, Dani W

Thanks for serving!

Nursery

Nursery Monitor: Merrill MC

September 6
AM Laremy & Rebecca DV, Marcy H

September 13
AM Duane & Jan B, Rob & Megan H

September 20
AM Jeremy & Kristi H, Kurt & Sharon V

September 27
AM Michael & Adi VP, Kyle & Andrea D

October 4
AM Jake & Trena VW, Andy & Rachel L

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 21** for the October issue.

Worship Schedule

Here's what's coming up on Sundays in the month of September:

September 6 AM:	Dr. Jason Lief
September 13 AM:	Dr. Kyle Dieleman
September 20 AM:	Dr. Jason Lief
September 27 AM:	Dr. Justin Bailey
6:00 PM:	Our World Belongs to God gathering

Note from the Deacons

Covenant Refresh "Almost there!"

One of my favorite lines in Star Wars is when the Red Leader repeats (over and over again) "Almost there!" during the climactic trench run on the Death Star. The anxious anticipation of impending success is palpable, ending with a huge explosion.

Our progress on the Building Refresh project is in a similar state of impending success (but absent the explosion). The first phase of the project started in the summer of 2023 with the replacement of the leaky, asbestos-ridden roof and a lofty goal of raising $180,000 by year's end. Your generosity helped make that goal a success.

Phase two of the project moved into updating the sanctuary. The fundraising goal for this phase was at a slower rate of $6,200/month for 48 months, with an estimated goal of $297,600 to be paid in full by December, 2027. Note the words "estimated goal," as paying ahead on the debt decreases interest costs.

The Deacons are delighted to announce that your faithful giving has accelerated this goal. Our remaining debt is only $20,000! Lord willing, and with some additional modest gifts from the congregation, the Building Refresh debt will likely be retired a full year early. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

-Val Zonnefeld

On behalf of the Deacons:
(Jan Bajema, Kyle Dieleman, Micah Dykstra, Mark Horstman, Micah Schreurs, Atul Shinde, Michael Vander Plaats, Val Zonnefeld)

A few of our Guess Who's Coming to the Backyard groups (who moved inside because of the heat)!

Giving Graph

Fund	Budgeted	Received	Difference
General	(1/1/26-8/23/26) $246,905	$190,025	-$56,880
Christian Education	(8/1/26-8/23/26) $9,731	$18,428	+$8,697
Refresh Building	(1/1/26-8/23/26) $48,646	$82,779	+$34,133

Notes: Deacons approved a transfer of $26,000 from the General to the Building Fund to pay off $40,000 of the debt. And the Christian Education Fund includes carryover of $12,876 from last year.

Calling All Singers!

On behalf of several Christian Reformed Churches in Sioux Center, it is my privilege to invite singers to come together for a Siouxland Christmas Choir Cantata Service on Sunday December 13, 2026 at 6:00 PM. This promises to be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in worship and with beautiful music: it will feature a 40-minute choral cantata, "Journey of Promises" by Joseph Martin, that will be accompanied by a full orchestra and includes arrangements of familiar Christmas carols and newly composed songs. This service will also include traditional liturgical elements (greeting, blessing, congregational singing, and an opportunity to give to a local Christian service organization).

Interested singers can sign up to be a part of the choir using the Google form link or the QR code below by October 14.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf4bgxY7p9m9H1zguZpm3yYtWLSwMU6IOweCsWu2T3NTVj5vw/viewform?usp=dialog

Rehearsals will be held at Covenant on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:30 PM these dates: October 28, November 4,11,18, December 2. On Wednesday, December 9, rehearsal will be at the Dordt Recital hall for the choir with orchestra from 8:15-9:30. And the final rehearsal is on Sunday, December 13, 4:00-5:30 PM in the BJ Haan Auditorium.

Singers (or their churches, on their behalf) will purchase a choral score at the first rehearsal on October 28 for $13 each.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. I hope you will consider joining in this unique opportunity for worship and music this December!

-Ryan Smit

At Work in the Garden

The Faith & Work Conference

What does it look like to faithfully serve God in the work entrusted to you? During *At Work in the Garden*, you'll spend time considering this question alongside Christians from a wide range of professions and callings.

Here's what you can expect:

- Keynote sessions from Jordan Raynor and Michaela O'Donnell, offering Biblical and practical perspectives on work as an act of cultivation, creativity, and faithful participation in God's kingdom.
- Worship opportunities led by The Porter's Gate.
- Engaging breakout sessions covering education, business, technology, healthcare, nonprofits, agriculture, and more.
- Meaningful conversations with fellow Christians who are seeking to honor God through their daily work.
- Fresh ideas you can put into practice in your workplace, church, and community.

We invite you to rediscover work as worship, calling, and participation in God's ongoing work in this world on September 17-19 on Dordt's campus. Register and find more information at www.dordt.edu/events/at-work-in-the-garden. Church members can receive a 50% discount using the code *gardenlilly* at checkout.

Summer

A Season of Good Gifts

Summer breaks wide open
like the ripe crack of a watermelon,
fullness and sweetness exploding outward
into the world, ready or not.

All of it is so good:
the hum of bees working,
dappled shade and strong breezes,
cucumbers sliced into vinegar,
kittens jumping to catch fireflies,
dirty feet washed with the hose,
the show-off swoop of a swallow,
shiny, fat goats on pasture,
happy, sweaty, tired kids who could really use a bath but—
ok, tomorrow's fine.

The goodness might run over and make a mess—
sweat dripping into eyes,
bug bites on shins,
lemonade spilled in the kitchen,
yet another armload of zucchini,
weeds, weeds, and oh look—more weeds.

It's ridiculous, really, the exuberance and abundance, but
there's no going back.
All that's left is to savor every drop,
even the ones that try to escape down your elbows.

-Dani Wyenberg

This poem was recently published on Dani's Substack "Tend & Keep."

Summer's abundance has been in full display on the Covenant shares table! We are so grateful to all of our gardeners who share with the whole church body all the colors and flavors and beauty of the summer season!