

# THE COURIER

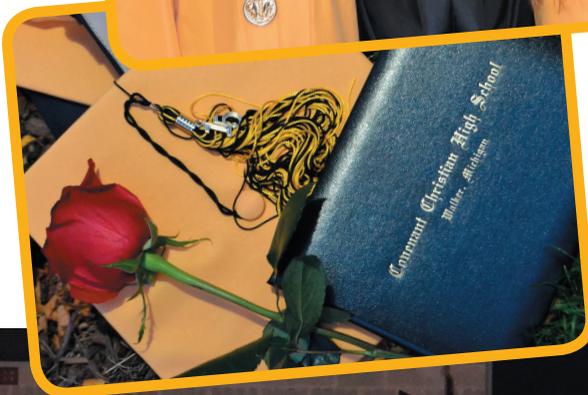
*SUMMER  
2015*

Published by the Board of  
**COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

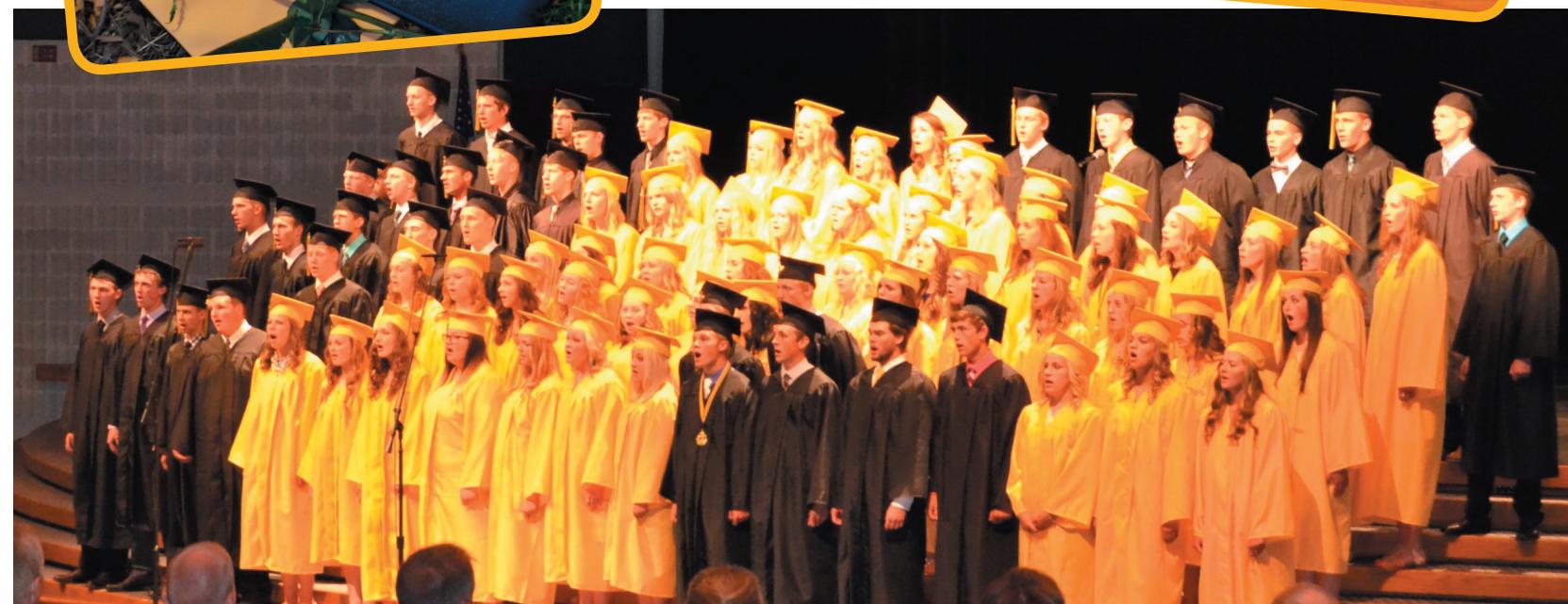
1401 Ferndale Ave. SW  
Grand Rapids MI 49534  
616-453-5048  
[www.covenantchristianhs.org](http://www.covenantchristianhs.org)

## Board Members

John Flikkema - President, Eugene Kamps - Vice President  
Dave Moelker - Secretary, Tim Kaiser - Treasurer  
Dave Meulenbergh - Vice Secretary, Kevin VanOverloop - Vice Treasurer  
Doug Bleyenburgh, Brad Brower, Dan Monsma



***Congratulations  
Class of 2015!***



## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Rick Noorman



In the last issue of the *Courier* we considered some of the internal challenges that we face in maintaining our vision and mission of providing a truly Reformed education for our children. We looked at the challenges of growth and how they impact a teaching staff and facilities. We also considered the challenge of maintaining a curriculum relevant to the needs of our students.

In this issue, and the next, we will consider some of the external forces and changes in the world around us that may have an effect on our work in the Christian school. The challenges come from the organizations around us that control education and from the general culture of the world that we are called to live in. Consideration of challenges from outside of the organization involves looking at the various environments in which the school must operate. These environments include the government regulations that encompass the world of education. It also includes the environment of the home and family. Finally, the school will also be affected by different aspects of the culture of the world around it. This article will focus on the influence that the government currently has on education and possible negative developments in the future. Next time we will consider the influence of the culture in the world around us.

The government is deeply concerned about the education of children. At every level of government there is a realization that an educated populace is imperative for the survival of our system of government. The people of the nation must be able to understand the essential elements of a democracy and be able to be active in the operation of this form of government. It is also essential to educate children to prepare them to be productive citizens in the economic sense. They realize that the continuation of the government also depends on the stability of the economy. Not only do they have to prepare students to be able to perform jobs that contribute to the economic growth of the country, but they must also be capable of growing the economy through research, innovation, and improved efficiency in operations. They must remain competitive in the global economy. The foundation for all of this is achieved through the nation's educational system. The following quote from Willona Sloan, writing in the *Association of Curriculum Development and Supervision*, "Education Update", states the essential purpose of education in the United States.

"In the United States, historically, the purpose of education has evolved according to the needs of society. Education's primary purpose has ranged from instructing youth in religious doctrine, to preparing them to live in a democracy, to assimilating immigrants into mainstream society, to preparing workers for the industrialized 20th

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Administrator's Report	Page 2
Address from President	Page 4
Finance Committee	Page 4
Enrollment Committee	Page 5
Biology Field Trip	Page 6
Valedictorian Speeches	Page 8
Science Night	Page 10
Athletic Director's Report	Page 11

century workplace.

And now, as educators prepare young people for their futures in a world that is rapidly changing, what is the goal? To create adults who can compete in a global economy? To create lifelong learners? To create emotionally healthy adults who can engage in meaningful relationships?"

"There are many different points of view on this topic," says Jonathan Cohen, cofounder and president of the National School Climate Center. "I think that my view, and most people's view, is that the purpose of education is to support children in developing the skills, the knowledge, and the dispositions that will allow them to be responsible, contributing members of their community—their democratically-informed community. Meaning, to be a good friend, to be a good mate, to be able to work, and to contribute to the well-being of the community." (ASCD "Education Update" July 2012 | Volume 54 | Number 7 )

Because of the great interest of the government in education we have seen the continued growth of government control over the years. Lindsay Burke, writing for the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research organization, outlines the history.

"For nearly half a century, the federal government has tried to improve public education by continually increasing spending and creating new programs. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, last reauthorized a decade ago as No Child Left Behind, intended to increase accountability and close achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers. The bill that was ultimately signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001 greatly increased the federal role in education, weakened state educational authority, and did very little to empower parents."

(<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/06/reducing-the-federal-footprint-on-education-and-empowering-state-and-local-leaders>)

The Federal government has been slowly and gradually usurping the educational responsibility and decision making of parents and placing it upon the government. This has been done in public education by shifting the financial responsibility. Ultimately the real control has shifted from the local districts, where parents were active, to the state government and then to the Federal government. The power of the parents in the public schools has been decreasing more and more as State and Federal funding has increased.

As those involved in Christian education, we cannot argue with some of the reasons that the government has to provide and regulate education. These things are important to maintain in a free nation. However, we have an even higher view of the essential purpose of education which will affect some aspects of what we do. These are, of course, the principles of covenantal education. The main focus of our education is to learn more about the God of our salvation as He has revealed himself in His Word, in His creation and in His providential work in time. When the government presses us to change our focus by implementing requirements that draw us away from this task, we must remain focused on our own reason for existence and mission.

How might the government work to challenge our schools? The requirement of mandatory education in America has always allowed private and Christian schools. But this is not the case worldwide. Some governments want to maintain ultimate control over what is taught in the schools and do not allow for viewpoints such as Christianity to be a part of the education of children. They want to have a monopoly on education and therefore a monopoly on what the children are taught. In many countries, schools have to be validated by the government and their students have to meet certain standards if they are going to be allowed to exist. The idea of compulsory education can be set up to include only specific providers of that education. Even though the environment in our country is currently very favorable, it is good to give thought to the ways that this can be taken away. We can then also give thought to the defense of our own system of schools.

One way that the government is involved is through the control of teachers. For a school to exist, it must have teachers. To become a teacher one needs to be trained and that training currently must be done through an educational institution that is given authority by the states to train teachers. The requirements to become a teacher vary from state to state in the U. S. The requirement that schools have certified teachers on staff also varies. The time may come that for a school to exist they must have teachers certified by the government. Standards for that certification may include provisions that compromise the beliefs of Christian teachers.

Governments may also encroach on Christian schools through regulation of the curriculum that is taught. They may someday require that all schools include classes

that teach evolution, tolerance of alternative lifestyles, and sex education. In Michigan, we currently comply with the requirement to teach a course in government and physical education. That list of requirements is always subject to change by legislation and could include many other topics. Enforcement of curriculum may take place in mandatory testing. Students who could not demonstrate that they have learned of specific concepts in the school will not be given a diploma. Enforcement of this could also involve limiting access to colleges and universities to those who have obtained a diploma from a school that can prove that they have these objectionable topics in the curriculum. It is also possible that colleges would not recognize religion courses found on a transcript and therefore determine that the students did not have enough allowable credits to be enrolled in college. This battle for curriculum in the schools has taken the national stage in the form of the Common Core curriculum. The standardization of curriculum through this means will give opportunity for the inclusion by all schools of material that may be contrary to the principles of Reformed Christian education. Enforcement of the adherence to this curriculum could come in the form of mandatory testing that is based upon the curriculum.

Influence in the curriculum can also take place through the requirement of the use of textbooks that promote worldly themes and humanistic philosophy. There are many state Boards of Education that approve and even mandate various textbooks in their schools. High profile cases of how U.S. History should be taught in a Social Studies textbook and how the argument about origins should have a place in a Science textbook have been in the news in Texas, California, and Mississippi. At this point in history there are still conservative Christians who are willing to take up this battle.

The enrollment policies that restrict those who are allowed to send children to our schools may someday also be challenged. We currently are able to limit enrollment to children whose parents can assent to Reformed principles of education that are found in our mission statement and basis of belief. It may not be far into the future that the government, through the stance for social justice and equal opportunity, would require equal access to all providers of educational services. The threat would be that those schools who base enrollment on such principles would be considered discriminatory.

Most of the challenges that have been stated here are not currently hitting our schools full on. But we certainly must be prepared for them. We need to position our schools so that they are doing everything possible to ground the existence and the practice of our schools on the principles of its stated purpose. There are requirements that we are currently able to meet and we should continue to meet them. Our teachers can and should be certified. Our students should be able to demonstrate through testing that they are meeting basic educational standards. Our  
(continued on page 5)

**FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT  
JOHN FLIKKEMA III**



**Graduation Message from the Board President**

On behalf of the school board, I extend congratulations to the 46th graduating class of Covenant Christian High School. Grandparents, parents, relatives, friends, teachers, students, and friends of Covenant joined at the commencement on June 7 as we celebrated with our student-graduates and rejoiced at the milestone in their race. The board extended a special acknowledgement to three co-valedictorians during the ceremony. Kelsey Kuiper, Mackenzie Kuiper, and Jared Minderhoud were recognized for their expenditure of great effort over many years.

Covenant Christian school was begun nearly 50 years ago with several goals in mind. The primary goal was to teach the founder's children to "love the LORD their God with all their heart, soul, and might" in the course of their earthly lives. Since Covenant's founders knew their children would live "in the world", they hired teachers to prepare each child for full-time Kingdom service and to help them function well in the job to which they were called. Teachers taught students:

1. To believe and obey the gospel of Christ
2. To live lives out of the new life gained from Christ
3. And to faithfully obey and serve Christ in government, in school and other work, in the home, and in the Church by doing His will in these institutions.

I believe it important to assure our grandparents, retired teachers, and founders of our high school that this is still the mission of Covenant Christian—the school which they set up, in which they taught, and for which they sacrificed.

The school board is well-pleased with the work of our staff as they carry out the parents' mandate of teaching the Truth of God as it is revealed in His Creation and as it is clearly explained in the Bible. We would like to thank our teachers for their efforts toward this end. We wish to extend a special thanks to Eric Pols. One of many excellent teachers at Covenant, he is moving to teach in our Redlands, California school. Our loss is their gain. Godspeed, Eric.

In that same vein, I would like to mention our retiring board members—Dan Bodbyl, Herm DeVries, and Keith Noorman—three excellent and faithful servant-leaders who have given a full measure of service in their devotion for Covenant Christian High. Gentlemen, thank you!

At the same time, I am delighted to announce Covenant's new school board members; David Meulenberg, Dr. Doug Bleyenbergh, and Tim Kaiser. Our school looks forward to benefitting from your passion for Christian education, your life experiences, and your skills. Gentlemen, welcome!

I see supporters of Covenant Christian High School, board members, and staff continuing to ceaselessly use their talents toward the goal of helping our students learn sound doctrine and creational truths. Our dedicated teachers daily proffer their gifts to assist students in this goal. Now, it is my hope that these students will press onward, enriching others with what they have been taught and have learned at Covenant.

**FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
TIM KAISER**



The finance committee would like to begin by giving a big thank you to our fellow committee member, Keith Noorman, who is retiring from the board after serving not just one or two years, but the past three years as treasurer of the school!

We would also like to thank all of the financial supporters of the school for once again helping us reach our annual pledge drive of \$270,000. This drive is an extremely important way to help defray the cost of tuition of all of our families. For information, this drive will be increasing to \$295,000 in this new school year 2015-16.

As the fiscal year of the school comes to a close at the end of June, the preliminary numbers show that we will once again meet the annual budget set for the 2014-15 year. A major reason for this is that tuition receipts have once again been good, with most families making timely tuition payments. It is very clear and encouraging to the committee the commitment our families have to a Covenant Christian education.

Earlier in 2015, Covenant Christian High joined the feeder schools in becoming part of the Smart Shop volunteer program, which brings additional income to the school. Many of you are familiar with this program and more volunteers are always needed. The board has decided that the proceeds of this program through at least June of 2016, will be split with 75% going to pay down school debt accumulated from the recent land purchase and building addition, and the remaining 25% going to the Tuition Grant Program. This Tuition Grant Program was set up to help families who are struggling and have children in both Covenant and one of the feeder schools

In conclusion, we would like to thank our Father who has given us these great financial blessings as a means to rear our covenant children in His Name and in His fear.



## *Welcome to New Students*

The Enrollment Committee would like to report that by the Grace of God Covenant will be adding 20 new students from 18 families, most of which are coming into Covenant with the Freshmen Class. Rev. Smit also has a 10th and 12th grader. We continue to see God's blessing on the continued growth of Covenant. For the upcoming 2015/2016 school year we are enrolling an expected 361 students for 9th through 12th grade. This is one more student than what was budgeted for when we made our projections back in February. We would like to thank all the parents for your continued support and trust in our school and the staff.

Family Name	Church	Student Name	Grade
Beute, Travis & Melissa	Georgetown PRC	Chloe Beute	9
Block, Tim & Robin	Byron Center PRC	Nolan Block	9
Bos, Greg & Pamela	First PRC (Hol)	Amber Bos	9
DeVries, Nathan & Dawn	Hope PRC	Alec DeVries	9
Kalsbeek, Brian & Jennifer	Hope PRC	Cole Kalsbeek	9
Kuiper, Marc & Rebekah	Southwest PRC	Joshua Kuiper	9
Langeland, Mike & Amy	Georgetown PRC	Erin Langeland	9
Lubbers, Joshua & Sara	Byron Center PRC	Kelly Lubbers	9
Lubbers, Jonathan & Melissa	Byron Center PRC	Travis Lubber	9
Pipe, Tyler & Michelle	Southeast PRC	Joshua Pipe	9
Smit, Rev. Richard and Tricia	First PRC (GR)	Irene Smit	9
Smit, Rev. Richard and Tricia	First PRC (GR)	Jay Smit	10
Smit, Rev. Richard and Tricia	First PRC (GR)	Rebekah Smit	12
Spronk, Rev. Clayton & Allison	Faith PRC	Courtney Spronk	9
Stoel, Matthew & Cynthia	Grace PRC	Luke Stoel	9
VanBaren, Joel & Brenda	Providence PRC	Bradley VanBaren	9
VanOverloop, Nathan and Tracy	Providence PRC	Bailey VanOverloop	9
VanOverloop, Matthew and Jodee	First PRC (Hol)	Collin VanOverloop	9
VanUffelen, Scott and Heidi	Faith PRC	Alex VanUffelen	9
Velthouse, Matthew and Amanda	Southeast PRC	Cassidy Velthouse	9

(continued from page 3)

curriculums should be clearly stated and grounded upon the principles that are the foundation of our school. In this way, concepts and topics that we don't teach can rightly be excluded. Our enrollment policies should be consistently applied to all families that seek enrollment. Financially, we should be wary of becoming dependent upon any financial relief that comes to us as we support our schools. Even tax deductions for contributions to our non-profit schools could someday be taken away. There is no question that educating our children today requires a great sacrifice. But it is highly possible that the sacrifice may become greater in the future.

We must constantly remember that our schools are a gift of God to us and they must be viewed as His work. Our schools would never be possible without the guiding and sustaining hand of God. Rev. R. Hanko comments on this in his book, *The Coming of Zion's Redeemer*, in his discussion on Zechariah 4:6. He writes,

"God works through his people and uses their efforts to build his kingdom, but nothing depends on them. The work is really the work of the Spirit in them and through them, done in such a way that all the glory of the work is God's.....Our confidence, therefore, in doing the work God gives us is still the same as it was for Zechariah and the Jews: "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." If we thought that anything depended on us, we would despair of the work as soon as it was begun and would very quickly become unfaithful. If we did not know that the Spirit works in us and through us, the work would look as impossible as it did to the Jews, who were poor, oppressed, and few in number." (p.185-186)

This sums up well the attitude that we must have as we work to promote and develop Christian education.

# STUDY OF BIOLOGY

On May 11, the Advanced Biology class left at 4:30 A.M. for the much anticipated and once postponed camping trip to Pigeon River Country State Forest northeast of Gaylord.

The purpose of this trip was to study the physical and chemical properties of several types of lakes including, kettle lakes, sinkholes, and bogs. We also look for elk and other wildlife species and sample stream bottoms to identify the various types of insect larvae which are so vital to the health of a trout stream. In addition, this trip introduces students to rustic camping which many have never done.

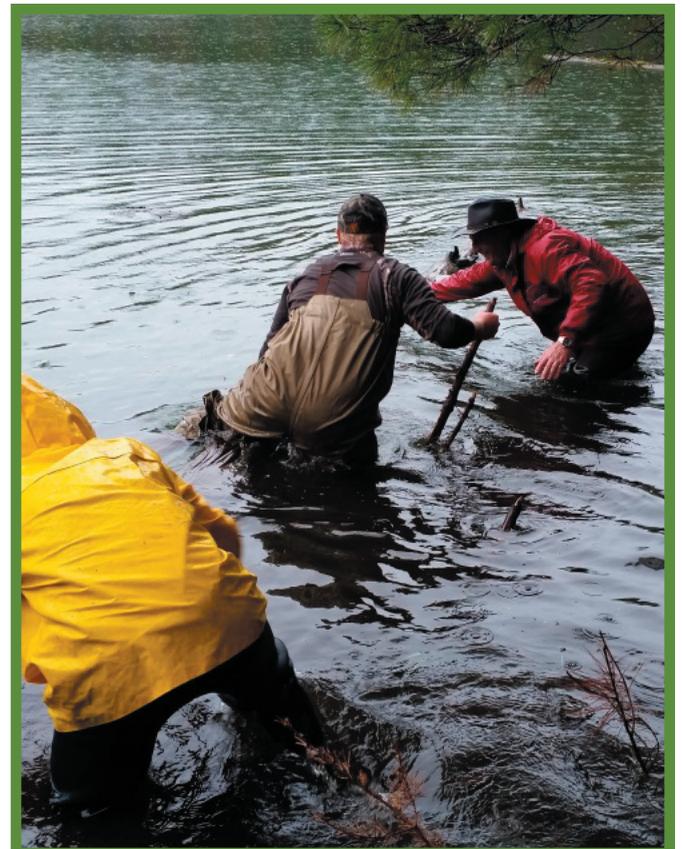


PIGEON RIVER



Some highlights of the trip included a couple of nice rainbow trout caught on the first cast, and the sighting of several Barred owls. Thanks to David and Jonny Cammenga and their owl calling skills, we were able to get a close-up view of these owls right in camp in the middle of the night. (It was difficult to sleep anyway due to the deafening sound of hundreds of spring peepers!) You can access some video of the owls at <http://www.covenantchristianhs.org/library/lanning.php>

Gary Lanning, Biology Teacher





The greenhouse continues to be an important part of the biology curriculum used almost exclusively by the Advanced Biology class. Pairs of students are each given a section of the greenhouse in which to raise the crop of their choice. They are each allowed to purchase three different types of seeds from an online catalogue and then monitor and record the growth throughout the year. One assignment is for each group to make a farm to table vignette in which they video the harvesting of one crop and turn it into an edible side dish. They also have to actually eat what they made! If interested you can access their vignettes at <http://www.covenantchristianhs.org/library/lanning.php>

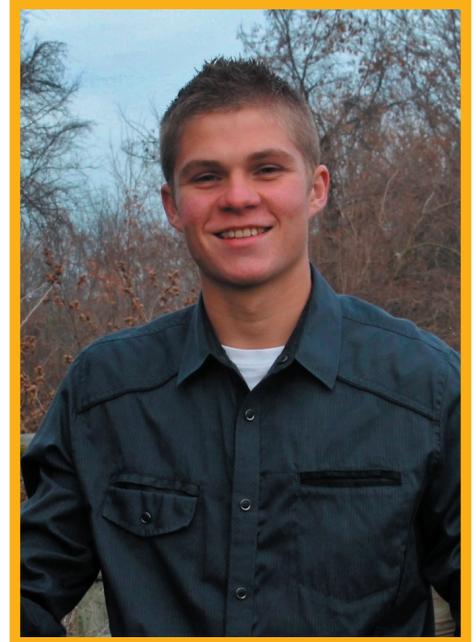


Covenant Christian High School was again blessed with three Valedictorians in the graduating Class of 2015. We thank these talented young people for their years of dedication and sharing with us *excerpts* from their speeches below. All three achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA.

### Jared Minderhoud

As part of the graduating class of 2015, I would like to welcome all of

you to our graduation ceremony this evening. The support of friends and family on a night such as this is a testimony of God's covenant faithfulness and a great joy and blessing to us all. For many of us here tonight, this is not the first Covenant Christian graduation ceremony we have attended. I have been in attendance to a decent amount myself and can say with experience that the speeches we have heard in the past and will hear tonight are basically the same, and that this is good. What a real privilege we have as a class and as a school society to hear speeches that ARE essentially the same each year. They are filled with the same truths, howbeit with different stories, of the love, faithfulness and sovereignty of our God as seen in our lives. May we not take this for granted, and pray that the same truths and convictions continue to be heard in this ceremony for years to come. Therefore, as we gather as a class on this special night, it is good for us to take a moment and look back and see the evidence of God's faithfulness throughout our high school years. Every experience in our life has been from the hand of our loving Father to shape and mold us, and to prepare us for the next stage of our life. And so, in gratitude for what he has done, we wish to thank those whom God has used to help us grow and mature.



We begin by thanking our teachers who have diligently spent much time fulfilling their calling that we may learn and experience so many different things in high school and see Christ in it all. We thank our parents, who have instructed us from our youth, in the fear of the Lord, and sent us to this school, Covenant Christian, where we have been taught in all subjects from a distinctively reformed perspective in order that we may continue to live and learn in every sphere of our lives from this same perspective. Therefore, we thank all those who have supported this school and continue to support it. We know it is not the building you care about, but us as students, and future students, that the entire body may be intellectually and spiritually strengthened for years to come. We know we have a lot to be thankful for, but particularly for what God has given us here at Covenant Christian High School.

It is a school that has sheltered us throughout the years as we needed to grow. As a class we have grown through our many experiences together, as God has surrounded us with god-fearing teachers, families and classmates, providing godly instruction and fellowship. In the classroom and out, we have learned to live together and to work together - sometimes for something as simple as winning homecoming two out of three years; or for achievements in extra-curricular activities. We have rejoiced together and we have sorrowed together. We have grown as individuals, maturing physically and spiritually... developing life-long relationships. These relationships include the relationships with our classmates, teachers and our own families not only, but also with our classmate's parents and families. One of the blessings of our good Christian schools is the godly friendships established. For this we give thanks to God.

### Mackenzie Kuiper

What I see as the main thing we learned wasn't specifically taught in a certain class, but in every class. It wasn't a part of one particular lesson plan; it was in every lesson plan. See God in every part of your life. In AmLit, we didn't just learn who wrote Walden, we also learned how Henry David Thoreau's worldview was evident in it and our Biblical response. In chemistry, we didn't only learn how many atoms are in a mole, we also saw God's infinite power and providence in that fact. During choir, we learned note names and key signatures and how to read music, and every day we



used that knowledge to better glorify our God. I could give so many more examples. That skill is so valuable – our whole life’s calling is to glorify God. What better way than to think of Him in every part of our life? When studying in your college classes this fall - see God. When you’re working at the restaurant – see God. Whatever your calling is in the next few years – see God.

To see God, you need to seek Him. This was taught both explicitly in lessons and implicitly by the examples of teachers in every class. Every morning, lunch, and afternoon, our teachers led us in devotions, showing us how to seek God by reading His Word and applying it to our lives. Weekly chapels and Monday morning devotions also strengthened their example. As we become older and older, this will become more and more important. We’ve already seen the importance of seeking God in the past months while trying to find our calling for the next few years. The decisions we need to seek God for will multiply in the following years as we contemplate marriage, buying a house, and raising children. Only seeking God’s will faithfully as we have been taught will lead us to make the right decision.

When we see God in everything and seek Him for every decision, we will also show God to those around us. That is the calling issued to us in our class text, I Timothy 4:12. Here, Paul exhorts Timothy to be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” It’s hard to remember, because we often don’t realize the impact we have at the time, but our actions have a huge influence on especially younger kids. When we entered Covenant three years ago, we were already examples to the first freshman class under us. Our responsibility as examples grew as we became older so that this year we were to be examples to the whole school as seniors. Even though we are leaving the school setting, the calling doesn’t change. There won’t be younger kids at school looking up to us anymore, but there will still be the children at church – who see us as adults now – and someday our own nieces, nephews, children, and grandchildren. Are your actions, in word and conversation, going to call them to seek God?

On Monday, some of us will be beginning full time jobs, in the “real world”. This fall, many of us will be continuing our education at different colleges, both public and Christian. We’re all going our separate ways, but we all have a solid foundation from Covenant. Remember that foundation. We’ve learned to see God in all things, seek God in all things, and to be an example to other believers. Those lessons, more than any other, will stick with us through the rest of our lives, and for that, we must always be grateful to our school.

### **Kelsey Kuiper**

In a few minutes, we, the Class of 2015, are going to walk up those stairs and receive our diplomas. Then, after the ceremony is over, we are going to walk out those doors. As we walk through those doors, that safe little bubble we’ve been living in the last eighteen years of our lives is going to pop. Then we’re going to be standing there as individuals, seen no longer as children but as adults, with only a fancy piece of paper in our hands. But we got a lot more out of that piece of paper than an education.

In certain depths through various means, we’ve been taught God. We’ve been taught God, and by knowing His infinity, we learned math. By knowing His providence, we learned history. By knowing His order, we learned science. This Christian education that we received isn’t, as Mr. Bergman once said, just “throwing holy water on a division problem.” By that, he meant that he didn’t just give us a division problem and point out that in Genesis 32, Jacob divided his sheep. The education we received for thirteen years wasn’t just vaguely applying the Bible, but our teachers used any opportunity possible to observe an essential quality of God in what they were teaching to help us understand the God whom we serve. Then in chapels and devotions, they helped us realize how we are supposed to live and who we are in relation to that God. Our teachers taught us to identify ourselves in Christ through this knowledge. This is what we have experienced for thirteen years.

Now that time is over, and we will be given our diplomas, but we have with us everything we’ve been taught. So we get to walk out of this bubble with that, and it is our calling to maintain it and remember it. We each have the calling to not let anyone despise what we learned as a youth but be an example of a believer in our whole walk of life. Parents and grandparents: this is what you have worked so hard to provide, and our receiving this diploma is your hard work coming to fruition. We thank those of you who have served on the school board to ensure that your children were taught in the way you know to be best for them spiritually. We’ve completed that training and are now receiving our diplomas to show it. You can be assured that your work has not been in vain. We know the importance of what we’ve been taught and the way in which we have been taught it. As we accept our diplomas, please know that we are going forth into the world understanding what we’ve been taught, loving the God we’ve come to know, and living as an example of a believer.



# Science

This Spring the Science department organized and presented a fantastic display of student achievement. Many fine projects were on display to visitors in a host of different areas explaining the depths and marvels of God's creation.

At Science Night, students enjoyed presenting and explaining topics that they had been taught throughout their schooling. Some branched out and created projects that explained deeper concepts.



The entire process required many hours of work: brainstorming topics, final topic selection, project design, the actual performing of the project, final conclusions, back-board design and lay-out, and final faculty interviews. We commend all the students for a job well-done!



The evening was very enjoyable. Parents and grandparents enjoyed interacting with the covenant young people and learning about the wondrous works of God.

Finally, and especially, we give thanks to our science teachers – Mr. Lanning, Mr. Minderhoud, Mr. Kuiper and Mr. VanOverloop – who took the initiative for this under-taking – for which we say thanks.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.” Proverbs 25:2



Due to concerns regarding football, Allendale, Hopkins, and Saugatuck left to join the O-K Conference for the 1994-95 season. Muskegon Catholic Central joined the River Valley in 1995. The River Valley maintained six schools until 2011.

As schools have added football, or as some schools have had decreases in enrollment, there has been more shuffling between conferences. As it stands at the end of the 2015 school year, Covenant and Western Michigan Christian are without a conference affiliation.

From 1985-2014, the River Valley has had a school in the Boys Soccer Finals 18 times, with 8 Championships!

Since 1998, there is only one season (2005) that the River Valley has not had a soccer team competing in the State Finals. That is 15 out of the last 16 years!

River Valley Schools have won State Championships in Volleyball, Baseball, and Basketball. There have been 11 River Valley teams crowned State Champions in Boys Basketball, with 8 other occasions of schools reach the Final game.

We are looking at the options available to us. Some conferences require football for membership. Travel distance would be an obstacle in many other leagues.

For at least the next two years, we will be competing as “an independent.” We will complete our schedules with schools that have openings that match our own. This might mean fewer Friday night basketball games, more travel, and it may mean that we could have a larger than normal number of days between events.

**FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**  
**Travis Van Bommel**



After 30 years in existence, the River Valley Conference has made the decision to disband.

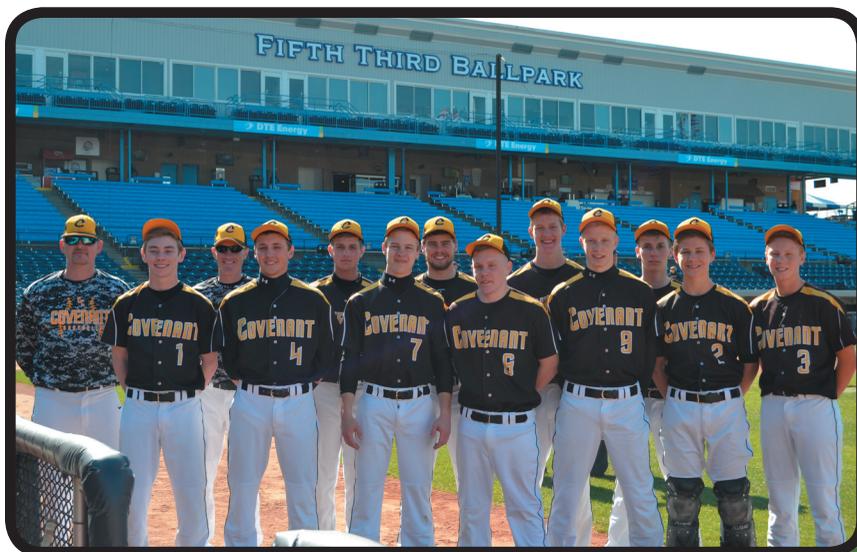
The River Valley Conference officially began in the Fall of 1985. Four schools: Allendale, Covenant Christian, Grand Rapids Baptist, and Western Michigan Christian formed the foundation of the League, which was often called “The Best Small School Conference in Michigan”. The list of MHSAA Champions from the River Valley only confirms that title.

Hopkins and Saugatuck were added to the River Valley, to expand the League to six schools. Tri-unity Christian was added in 1988, and Freedom Baptist was added shortly thereafter.



## SPRING SPORTS

The spring sports seasons at Covenant officially ended on May 30. Three of our teams - Baseball, Girls Soccer, and Softball - were eliminated in the district semi-finals on that date. All of these teams took on some the toughest schools in the area, and finished their seasons playing at their peak. The Golf team had its district meet earlier that week. Although no one advanced past the district in golf, these young golfers gained valuable experience for the future. The young people on these teams were great representatives of Covenant Christian High School. Congratulation to all of our spring sports teams, and their coaches, for a job well done.



I think the highlight of the year for me were the baseball games at Fifth-Third Ballpark. According to the Whitecaps staff, this was one of the largest crowds that ever attended a high school game at that facility. The “roar of the crowd” could be heard on base hits, strikeouts, and great plays made by both teams. It was a great family event, and gave many people an opportunity to see our baseball team. Thank you to all of the great fans at this event, and to all of the sponsors, who helped keep this event affordable.

So we wrap up our school year. Some teams had winning records, some did not. Some advanced out of district play, some did not. Some coaches were in their first season, some have been here awhile (17 years). There were times of joy, anger, sorrow, frustration, exultation, and celebration (sometimes all in the same day). We learned about friendship, hard work, team work, patience, pushing ourselves to the limit, and putting others first. We learned how to respect our opponents, the officials, and our coach. We learned how to win with dignity, and we learned how to lose with dignity. These are some of the valuable life lessons that we learned during the school year. We say “Thank You” to our dedicated coaches and assistants!



Thank you to everyone who volunteered throughout the school year – admissions, concessions, scoreboards, and announcers. This department will not function without the help of parents, and all of the people who give up their time for our athletic teams.

