

# THE COURIER

*SUMMER  
2016*

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

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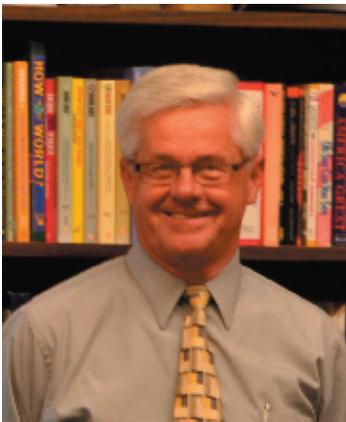
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## **Reflections on Grandparent's Day from Rev. Van Overloop**

This day allows grandparents to see their grandchildren in their own setting and in an environment where they spend a lot of their time. We hear about their being at school and we hear about some of their experiences there, but after walking the halls and classrooms and hearing the teachers, it is more real.

It allows grandparents to observe the teachers as they interact with our grandchildren and as they give some instruction.

It allows the grandchildren to realize how interested their grandparents are in them and in what they are doing.



Grandparents are among those who are approached to support financially the cause of Christian and parental education. Grandparent's Day gives to grandparents the opportunity to see for what their gifts and contributions are given. And it is a very real encouragement to them to continue to give and even to give more.

It makes grandparents more conscious of the need to pray for our grandchildren, for their teachers, and for the school as a whole.

Grandparent's Day allows grandparents to grow in humility and in gratitude as they are given an increased appreciation for what God has given to them. Grandparent's Day affords many examples of the work of the teachers and of the faith of our grandchildren. It is so wonderful to see our grandchildren grow spiritually. We know this is not because of us nor is it because we are worthy of such a wonderful blessing. Instead we see again that God is good – very good!

*A Goodly  
Heritage passed  
down through  
the Generations*





### Random Musings from the Administrator

My article for this issue of the Courier contains some thoughts and reflections that have come to mind in this past year.

### Our Mission

For the past school year the display case in the main hallway has declared that Covenant Christian High School is "A Faithful Presence in God's World." As parents, students and teachers, we have taken part in that effort. We have participated in the area of teaching and learning in the classrooms and homes every day. We have participated as part of a community which is the body of Christ as parents have worked together to provide for the school. In the school, students and teachers have worked together enjoying the blessings of life with fellow believers. And, we all have participated through all of our activities as a witness to the world around us. We do this on a daily basis as we go about our business while bearing the name Christian. It is our hope that our students will see this as their calling while they are in school and after they leave. As God's people, our focus is not on redeeming this world for Christ. We know from God's Word what the end of this world will be. But we must not live in isolation from this world nor be discouraged by the direction taken by the powers of this world. We are present in this world

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and our calling, as well as the calling of our children, is to continue to be lights in this world of darkness. We must live in faithful service to the God of our salvation in every part of our life and in everything that we do. Our work as parents and teachers is to help our children understand how blessed they are to be included in the covenant of grace and how privileged they are to be able to use what they have been given to show thanks to God. May God help us at Covenant Christian to keep this as the focus of our work.

A large graphic with a black background and an orange border. At the top, the words "COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL" are written in large, orange, serif capital letters. Below this, a light blue horizontal bar contains the text "A FAITHFUL PRESENCE IN GOD'S WORLD" in dark blue, sans-serif capital letters. Underneath, there are three colored boxes: a yellow one on the left with the text "In Teaching and Learning", an orange one in the middle with "In Community with each other", and a green one on the right with "In our Witness to the World". Below these boxes is a collage of various photographs showing students and staff in different settings, including classrooms, sports events, and community activities. At the bottom, another light blue horizontal bar contains the text "THAT ALL BE DONE TO THE GLORY OF GOD" in dark blue, sans-serif capital letters.

## **A New Role**

For the first time in 31 years, I will not be involved as a parent in any of our schools. In the fall of 1985 my wife and I sent our first child, Michael, off to kindergarten at Heritage Christian School. At the recent graduation we saw our youngest child, Brianna, walk off the stage as a Covenant graduate. At the graduation I took the opportunity to address parents and I would like to also use this newsletter to express the thanks of my wife and I. We want to thank all of you parents who have stood with us to make possible this great work of our Christian schools. I'm sure that I speak on behalf of many other parents who are also graduating their last child and I hope that this feeling is shared by all parents. This is a work that can only be accomplished as a result of our love for the Lord and for the children that he has given us. Through this love we, as parents, work together, we face challenges together, we encourage each other, we tolerate each other, and we sacrifice in many ways as we seek the best education for our children. Thank you for your commitment to Christian education. It is our prayer that God will continue to instill this commitment to all of our parents in the years ahead.

## **Graduation, A Spiritual Activity**

We conclude each school year with our Commencement exercises, more commonly known as Graduation. Perhaps because, as the school administrator and one who puts the program together, I become very much invested in this event that I find it to be a very spiritual time. As graduates and families of graduates, we are often focused on the celebratory nature of the event. It is a tremendous milestone and a wonderful event for all of us to celebrate. However, it is also a great time to consider the grace of God working in our lives and the lives of our children. The spiritual character of our graduation is found throughout the program. The ceremony begins with the singing of Psalter #394. "I will extol thee, O my God, and praise thee O my King" in verse 1 which leads into the powerful words of verse 2, "Each generation to the next shall testimony bear, and to the praise from age to age, Thy wondrous acts declare." I often find it difficult to sing that song without becoming emotional. Following opening prayer, we continue to give thanks to God. This occurs in the speeches of the students and the invited minister, as well as the songs that are sung by the audience and the class. It is all summed up with the words of the doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." We all must consider our Christian school to be a great blessing from God. It is something that we can never take for granted and it should cause us to praise him for giving this great gift to us as parents and students.

## **CCHS Choirs, an encouragement to God's people and a witness to the world**

We often consider that fact that we are living in a global

society. With the tools of technology, it is possible to connect with many people from many different lands and cultures. I recently noticed that one of the choir performances from a concert given 4 years ago has been viewed over 45,000 times on YouTube. Another song was viewed over 20,000 times and several were over 10,000. I find this to be truly amazing! Digging into the information available from the YouTube channel, I could see that the "CovenantCHOIRS" site itself has received over 650,000 hits. Just one 28 day period from April 13 - May 10, 2016, included over 1,200 hours of the choir videos viewed by people in 25 different countries of the world. It is amazing how God is using our school, the talents of our young people and our director through the gift of music to be an encouragement to saints throughout the world.

## **Need for teachers**

As our school, and all of the schools in our denomination continue to grow there is an increasing need for teachers. The enrollments of the schools in our area are projected to grow significantly in the years ahead. In addition to the schools in our area, the other Protestant Reformed schools are also growing. For many years Covenant was the only workplace available for someone who wanted to teach in high school. Now we have high schools in Dyer, Indiana; Hull, Iowa; Loveland, Colorado; Redlands, California; and one starting up in Wingham, Ontario. The current directory of Protestant Reformed Schools lists 171 active teachers. We will have to continue to add teachers to handle this growth and replace those who will be retiring. Parents and grandparents can often be helpful in encouraging our young people to consider making this great work a part of their life. If you sense that a young man or woman has the gifts necessary to be a teacher, encourage them to seriously look into this as a possible career. It is a job that requires much preparation and sacrifice but it is also very rewarding work. The future of our schools depends greatly upon the availability of capable teachers.

## **State Champs, BCAM award**

Once in a while there is group that forms in a school setting that is really special. This past year our Girls' Varsity Basketball team was such a group. Not only was the core group of seniors able to play together well and have much success on the court for four years but they were also very talented academically. This 2015 -16 team was recognized by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan for having the top team GPA (grade point average) of all Class C schools in Michigan and they were the second highest in the state regardless of class. Two of the senior team members were honored as our Co-valedictorians (with a 4.0 GPA) and two of the Junior team members are also earning 4.0's. The other members of the team were not far behind them. It was not just the top students that helped earn this award. It was a consistent performance by all of the members of the team.

(Continued on Page 6)

**FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD**  
Eugene Kamps, Education Committee



The school year is done and the 48th class has graduated. The work of educating the covenant youth, to prepare them for the place that our Lord has in store for them, is a high calling. All who have a part in this instruction take this calling to heart. Our teachers come prepared daily to teach the subject material in the light of God's Word, knowing they stand in place of the parents for 8-9 hours a day and having a sincere concern for the spiritual instruction of the students. Our Administrator works in aiding the teachers and staff in this instruction also. He is busy in the day-to-day operations of the school and at times the light in his office is on till late in the day or he is in meetings with committees and or with the Board. The Board is to be diligent in the running and governing of the school, seeing to it that the business of the school is run orderly and that the policies are maintained. The office staff, the librarian, the resource room instructor and aids are needed to keep Covenant operating efficiently.

As parents, we are to see to it that while at school our students conduct themselves as children of God and come prepared and ready to receive instruction. We must also pay our tuition on time so that the school may meet its financial responsibilities. In all it takes a lot of effort on everyone's part to keep Covenant operating in an orderly way; but, more importantly, to instruct and prepare the covenant youth for their calling and walk before the Lord. The Education Committee can witness to this effort. Each year the Education Committee evaluates the work of our Administrator and teachers and can report that both are doing a remarkable job and we thank our Administrator and all the teachers for their efforts.

As Social Media continues to develop and be part of our daily lives, we urge parents to instruct their children in the proper use of this tool. The different forms of social media can be misused. Bullying through these means will not be tolerated at Covenant. Students need to be instructed to be careful when using this tool.

Monday night we saw the love and concern for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education as 251 society members gathered to conduct the business of the school.

New members continue to join the ranks, the budget for a new school year was passed, new board members were elected and a 5 room building addition was approved. It was heartwarming to see the gym full of men concerned for Reformed education of the covenant youth. The new members are: from Adams/ Eastside- Mark Ophoff, from Hope- Nick Kleyn Jr., and from Heritage- Al VanDyke. Welcome men to CCHS Board. The retiring members are John Flikkema, David Moelker, and Kevin VanOverloop. Thank you men for your 3 years of dedicated service to Covenant.

We would like to thank Liz Thompson for her years of service to Covenant. She and her husband Tim are expecting their first child this summer and will be a busy mom at home. We wish the Lord's blessing upon them.

As the student body continues to grow so is the need for teachers. We are happy to welcome for the next school year Mr. Karl Dykstra and Mr. Ethan Mingerink to our teaching staff. Karl and his wife (Megan) and family (3 children) attend Hudsonville PRC. Ethan and his wife (Alyssa) and family (2 children) also attend Hudsonville PRC. They will make a great addition to the CCHS teaching staff. Welcome Karl and Ethan.

Also, we have a couple of coaches to announce. Courtney Peterson will take over the Varsity Volleyball Coach position and Shon Griess will be the new JV Baseball Coach.

The Education Committee covets your prayers for our Administrator, teachers, staff, students, and Board. May God receive all glory and honor. We thank God for the great blessing of Covenant Christian High School; that He has given unto us wherein the covenant youth may be educated and trained in the fear of His name.



**Covenant Christian School Board of 2015-2016**

**FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Dan Monsma, Technology Committee**



As a society it is truly amazing how dependent we have become upon technology. Likewise at Covenant, the more classes I visit, the more I see that teachers have been using technology wisely in the classroom. Lecture outlines, videos and the convenience of Google Classroom are available at the stroke of a finger. Through Google Classroom, teachers can post their daily lessons, assign homework, and students can then complete their work and turn it in to the teacher, all without paper. Properly used, technology will help students acquire the skills they need. To facilitate this growing reliance on technology, we now have 80 Chromebooks that are used 90% of the school day.



Continuing instruction in technology is also a necessity. Nine of our teachers recently attended the MACUL Conference in downtown Grand Rapids. MACUL stands for Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning. MACUL provides one of the most comprehensive conferences in the country on the uses of technology in education. Teachers were able to learn how to integrate the use of technology into their curriculum. Staff members that attended believed that it was time well spent.

This past summer, there were significant upgrades to our Wi-Fi system. Committee members, Mr. Rick DeVries and Mr. Matthew Elzinga with help from Mr. Mitchel Haan, upgraded and improved the Internet coverage in the building. Our librarian and technology specialist, Mrs. Ria Faber has been quietly aiding and assisting teachers and students in the use of computers and applications. A special thank you to Mrs. Faber for her willingness to share her time and expertise.

It is a great blessing to have these resources at our school! With all this technology in our students' daily lives, we are grateful to the godly men and women at Covenant who are proper examples of how to use these gifts without becoming tainted by the world. As part of a comprehensive plan to teach our children accountability, monitoring of all devices is utilized. Finally, to equip our children to use digital technologies wisely, guidance is given so that students can learn to make good decisions in their service of Christ.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.



# Classroom Visits

While visiting classes at Covenant, I often wonder if I were a student today, would I be a better one? I'd like to think that I might even find my name on the honor roll. But that's enough of trying to relive my high school years through rose colored glasses.

One of the most enjoyable tasks we have as board members is the classroom visit. Once a month a pair of men observe the heart of our school, teachers instructing our covenant youth. Aside from Grandparent's Day it is rare to have observers in the classes. If it were possible for more of our constituents to see the work that goes on at CCHS, our teachers would be put on higher pedestals.

Often neither the teacher nor students know we are coming. Sometimes we enter a classroom only to find that there is a test or quiz, a writing assignment in class, or a video that day. When this is the case we usually move on to find a class with more interaction between teacher and students.

Each time I watch our teachers in action, I am struck by the enthusiasm and passion they bring to the classroom. Whether the subject is Biology, English, Worldviews, Psychology, Geography, Spanish or Geometry (and more) the instruction is infused with a Christ centered perspective. Every morning begins and ends with prayer as does each afternoon. The classroom walls are teeming with spiritual messages that live in hearts and minds. All of our teachers are skilled in conveying the excitement of learning more about this earth in relation to God's kingdom. At CCHS students are prepared to be good stewards of their God given talents and made ready to take their place in this world.

When the visits are finished, I am usually relieved that a teacher didn't ask me a question during class time that I could not answer. My children are very relieved that I didn't embarrass them.

Dan Monsma



(Continued from Page 3)

We are thankful for the great work that these students have done on the court and in the classroom. This award is a great testimony to the work of our teachers, students, and parents. Congratulations to the 2015-2016 Lady Chargers!

## Fewer Wrenches, More Laptop

There is a great emphasis these days about the need for students to continue their education beyond high school. This is becoming true whether one is looking toward professional work or whether it is more of a mechanical or technical nature. When we give advice to our students we are careful to keep in mind that college is not for everyone. There are many students who may not be capable or may not be interested in pursuing education after their graduation. This may be especially true of those who are mechanically inclined and more comfortable with a wrench in their hand than a pencil or keyboard. Yet we hope that those who are capable would see the benefits of continuing their education in some way beyond high school.

I recently received the newsletter of the "Auto/Diesel Institute" from Baker College which sheds light on these benefits. In this newsletter they stress the importance of further education for those interested in these types of jobs. "As vehicles become more sophisticated, so do the tools needed to fix them. Audi is actually testing a robotic service assistant. Technicians now deal with issues that would have required an engineering degree in the past. In fact, U.S. News & World Report now lists "auto mechanic" as one of the country's top 20 STEM professions. Today, a huge skills gap is opening up - one expert estimates that the average entry-level mechanic has less than 20% of the knowledge needed to do the job. Employers are looking for candidates who know the latest and most advance diagnostic technologies and will pay handsomely to get them. Payscale.com says that there is up to a \$50,000 gap in annual salaries between unskilled technicians and highly trained and experienced techs. Specializing in hybrid technologies can boost salaries by 20% or more; electric troubleshooting skills add an extra 10% to a paycheck."

I often hear from our constituents who work in the skilled and mechanical trades that there is a great need for workers in this area. Their companies are often willing to pay those who they hire to continue their education in these technical programs. We feel very confident that the education that we provide for our students does prepare them well to continue in these fields of work. We know that God has a plan for each one of the young people that go to Covenant. Our job is to help them continue to develop their knowledge base, skills, and a Reformed worldview as they continue to seek God's will for their life.

R. Noorman

# WELCOME GRANDPARENTS

Covenant Christian welcomed Grandparents to a special morning where the young and old came together to share memories and fun. Grandparents caught a glimpse of their grandchild's daily life and met with their teachers and friends; and students saw current events and past events from their grandparent's historical and spiritual perspective.

Grandparent's Day always brings a newfound appreciation for our grandparents and their wisdom, love and sacrifice.

## Thoughts on Grandparents Day by Case Lubbers

Friday, April 29, 2016, my wife and I were privileged to go to our first Grandparent's Day at Covenant where our granddaughter Jori Baas is attending. Little did we know or understand, when we stood at the cornerstone laying event 48 years ago before the school was opened, what the Lord had in store or that there would even be a Grandparent's Day event. It was heartwarming to see how the Lord has blessed us as families and community. Our sincere thanks to the Board, Administrator, Teachers, Students, and support personal for an outstanding day of school life, chapel and fellowship that will long be remembered.



## Reflections for Young People from Mrs. Sandra Parks

Students, as you reflect on your future, one of your experiences will be with young people who may attend another denomination or do not attend church. What a wonderful opportunity to express your feelings about God and His wisdom. For the Lord tells us in Matthew 5:12, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." And in I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

The purpose of our salvation and what we have been taught is clear to everyone who passes by that God is sovereign. The Lord commands us to go out and preach the gospel; for it is love, pure love. May the Lord bless and protect you; may the Lord's face radiate with joy because of you; may he be gracious to you, show you His favor, and give you his peace.



*Psalm 127:3  
Lo, children are an heritage  
of the LORD*



# Listening to Another Generation

This spring, the Church History class completed an Oral History project calling upon them to listen and record the thoughts of our elderly generation.

This project encouraged students to take the time to listen to other peoples' stories and to engage with and learn from them. Students interviewed someone from an older generation about their life, learning, and faith, then created projects reflecting on that person's life experiences. Many students interviewed their own grandparents or other older friends in the church community.

Students reflected on the many blessings they have received and the importance of inter-generational connections in their lives, and many learned new things about their grandparents.

The following excerpts are from the student's projects for Mr. Dan Van Uffelen's Church History class.

## Mr. Mark Hoeksema

"My grandpa [Rev. Herman Hoeksema] would say "Come on boy we're going swimming". And that was not an invitation, that was not an option, that was a command. "We're going swimming!" It didn't matter how cold the weather was; it didn't matter how cold the lake was; we went in. That meant I had to go in too, even though sometimes I didn't want to."

"I started playing the piano when I was five years old. Who taught me? My mother [Gertrude Hoeksema] . What was my motivation? She told me I was going to learn."



by Ashley Engelsma and Sarah Essenburg

**Mr. Rich Moore** on his experience in the seminary "We learned everything in the basement of First Church. We had lunch breaks. And at these lunch breaks, of course, we'd break out our cigarettes, or pipes, and smoke in the basement of the church. You know, we don't do those things anymore. Those are some of the odd things, you know, that our people can't conceive of today, how that went. But this is also our history in our churches."

by Sue De Jong

## Rev. Woudenberg

Grant Flikkema: "Do you see any issues that you would like to address?"

Rev. Woudenberg: " I would like to see us approach evangelism in a different way than we do. I went out to meet people. We tend to wait for them to come in, which does not work. I would like to be aggressive. Outreach has always fascinated me – how to bring people around to the Reformed faith, from talking with them and meeting them. You have to go out. You have to go out into the highways and byways and seek them out to find them."



by Grant Flikkema

*Psalm 103:17-18  
But the mercy of the LORD is  
from everlasting to everlasting  
upon them that fear him,  
and his righteousness unto  
children's children.*

### Kay Van Dyke

“The world is so tempting for young people, you have to be careful with your families, be sure you talk to them, and pray for them, that the Lord will lead and guide them in the way they should go because it’s harder for parents nowadays to raise a family the way they should. The Devil is busy at work all the time. I’m glad I’m to that point where I don’t have to worry about that anymore. All I do is worry about my grandchildren now...”

Read the church papers and the church news. Be involved in those things, so your family can see you are concerned with it. The world is so strong, it’s pulling the other way all the time, and with all your might and main you have to fight against it. That young fellow over there [pointing to the interviewer’s thirteen-year-old brother who was present] needs to have the LORD as his leader, and follow in the LORD’s footsteps.” by Aaron Van Dyke

### Mr. Herman Ophoff

“Professor Hanko made a comment once, and I never forgot it. He gave a lecture years and years ago at Hope church and made this statement: “Where words of truth are most purely preached, the devil is hardest at work.” You have to remember that girls, because it’s true. It is just a fact and you will find that to be so in your lifetime. That’s what 1953 is all about. That is what 1924 was all about.” by Lexi Ophoff

*Jeremiah 17:7-8  
Blessed is the man that  
trusteth in the LORD, and  
whose hope the LORD is.*

### Mr. Alvin Rau

“The same doctrine thankfully is still proclaimed today as it was then. It is our prayer that we continue that.”

“Prosperity has its dangers. It is nice to live in prosperity but there are the dangers that we don’t become aware of. Our constant dependence on God withers when all goes well. Health is great, wealth is great. But when there are times of need and want, that is when you draw closer to Him, and experience his nearness more.”

“Humble thanksgiving to the Lord for his covenant faithfulness to us as Protestant Reformed. Our churches are full twice on Sundays and it is only because of the instruction that our children receive from little on up. I certainly hope that the generations following continue. It is our hope and our prayer.” by Rebecca Boeve



### Mrs. Barb Dykstra

“I was brought up Christian Reformed. Our form of worship in the CRC was just like it is today in the PRC, but in the past 50 years it has changed. You can’t even recognize the original anymore. The reason it is so different is because the doctrine is different.”

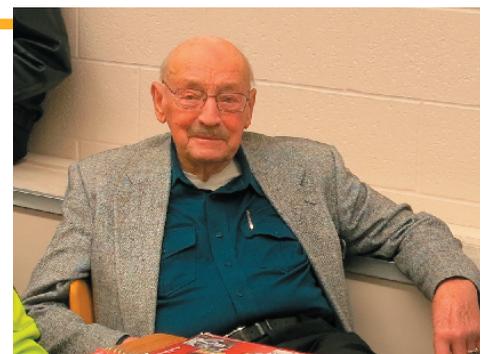
by Reuben Talsma



### Mr. Cornelius Jonker on his experiences in World War II

“And I was sitting there on my cot all alone, and it felt a little like someone

tapped on my shoulder and said, “Look, you made confession of faith (We did, before we left for the army.) Now exercise your faith, trust in the Lord, commit your way to him, and he will direct your path.” by Tyler Kraker



### Mr. Gilbert Schimmel

“My brother was recruited to be a glider in Belgium and Germany (which was someone who came in the middle of night flying down from a plane into enemy territories) But he was wounded so he came back to the United States. He came to Michigan instead of Tracy, Iowa, where we were all born so then I came too in 1948.” by Noah Windemuller

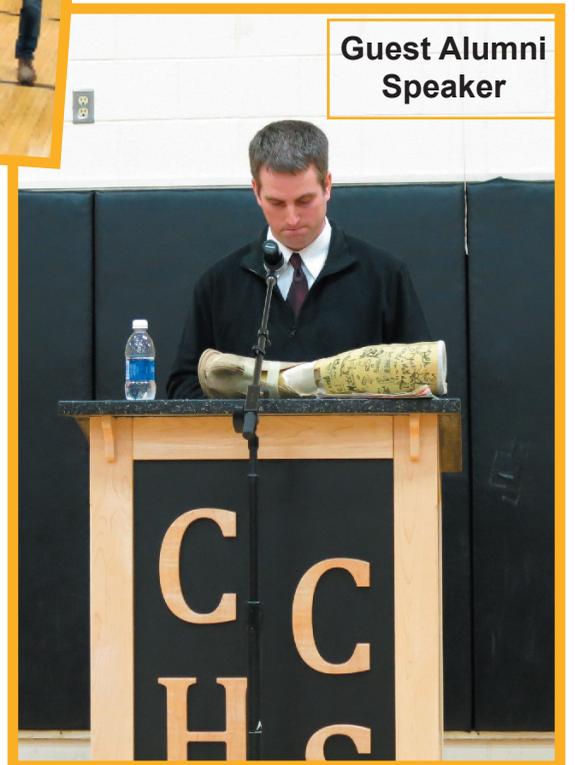
# HOMECOMING WEEK

CCHS Homecoming Week of 2016 was a great success! The halls of Covenant were teeming with excitement as we began this fun-filled week. Thank you to the Student Council who provided a number of enjoyable activities designed to bring together all of the students. Many great memories were created! Homecoming includes the opportunity to welcome alumni back to the school and the basketball games at the end of the week. Generally a huge enthusiastic crowd comes together and it is an event that students, parents, staff and alumni all enjoy!



Something's Fishy

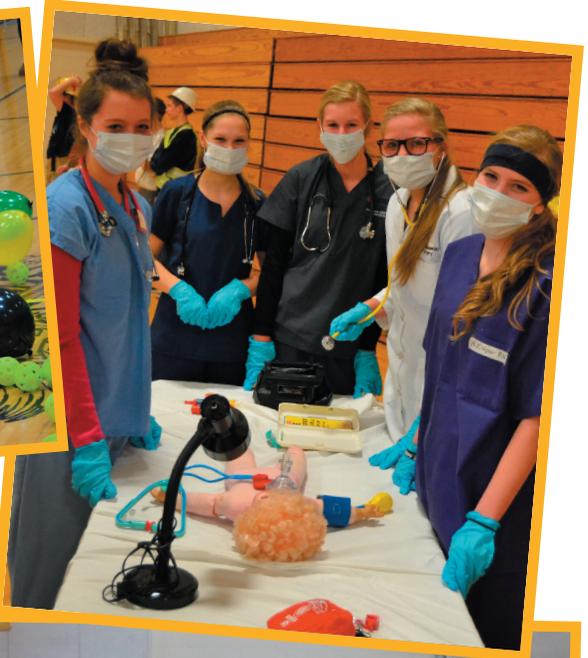
Guest Alumni Speaker



Coast to Coast



Fast Forward



Black/Gold Day





Covenant Christian High School was blessed with six Valedictorians in the graduating Class of 2016. We thank these talented young people for their years of dedication and sharing with us *excerpts* from their speeches below. All six achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA.

### **Caitryn Hassevoort**



On behalf of the Senior Class of 2016, I am privileged to welcome you here tonight. We are honored that you have come to share this special night with us.

At the beginning of our high school days, I don't think any of us thought this day would come so quickly. Here we are, nearly four years later, at the end of our high school journey. Before we go our separate ways, it is important that we recognize everyone who has made this journey possible.

Thanks, first of all, to the teachers and staff at Covenant. You have willingly and devotedly spent countless hours working to make sure our school runs smoothly, to give us a firm, reformed education, and to push us to honor God in every area of our lives.

Not to be forgotten are our parents and grandparents who have sacrificed so much for us. A quote by Elizabeth Stone tells of this sacrifice well. It reads: "Making the decision to have a child - it is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body." Raising children is, by no means easy, and requires an amazing sacrifice of love. The most obvious sacrifice is the thousands of dollars that you put aside every year for tuition, money that you could have used for some extravagant vacation or for a new car, house, or boat. But you didn't. By God's grace, you realized the importance of training your children in the fear of the Lord, and chose to use God's good gift of Christian schools to accomplish this purpose. Most importantly, you sacrificed your time and love for your children, a sacrifice that means far more than money ever could. Words cannot describe how thankful we are for you.

### **Rachel Rutgers**

Life is a pilgrimage, a sojourn on the way to our eternal home, and we have had the privilege of walking it together throughout these four years.

During this time, we have walked together in sorrow. The list on Miss Knott's board reminded us every day of those in need, cards were often made and signed by hundreds of students for an afflicted teacher or fellow student, and countless prayers were lifted up for our brothers and sisters enduring trials, both personally and in their families.

In these four years, we have also walked together in laughter.

These experiences have undoubtedly drawn us closer throughout the past four years, both to each other as a class and to our heavenly Father. We have walked together in sorrows, in joys, and most importantly, in faith. Mr. Scott VanUffelen once said to us, "You're doing yourself a disservice if your answer in life is an excuse."

This quote was just something that he said in passing during a class lecture, but it stood out to me at the time and has often come to mind since then. It serves as a good reminder that truly walking with God demands activity - a living faith does not look for excuses, but will inevitably bring forth good works. As we have grown spiritually throughout our high school years, we have come to realize this truth more personally. We truly have walked with God as we walked the halls of Covenant Christian High. We have been surrounded and encouraged in every step of our journey these past four years by teachers and students who deeply love us as fellow members of Christ's body, truly care about us, and genuinely desire to see us grow.

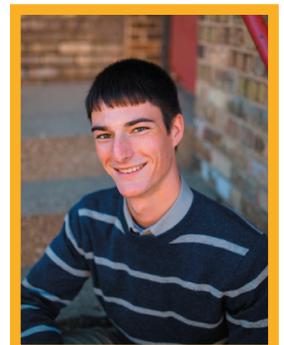


### **Ryan Schipper**

Having learned through the work and struggles of these past four years to put our faith and trust in the faithful promises of God, we are compelled to live out our lives in thankfulness to him, that is, to lead lives of sanctification. This sanctification is a living work of Christ in us which arises from our being crucified with him. In being members of his body and partakers of his crucifixion, we have the strength to lay aside all earthly distractions and temptations in order to live for Christ.

Our goals pertain to the things of the kingdom of God, the kingdom as it exists in the instituted church. So it is that we live for Christ in, most recently, applying ourselves in our studies here in our Christian schools. Soon, we live for Christ in studying at various colleges where our mark will be to spread the gospel of Christ through our personal witness, not to strive to "redeem" culture. And through our whole lives we live for Christ, marrying in the Lord, raising covenant children in his fear, making the same sacrifices of which we are recipients tonight in sending them to good Christian schools. In these things we crucify our sinful nature which would otherwise hide from the responsibilities of being a Christian witness, desire to save money to the neglect of kingdom causes, and lead us away from our proper place as members in the church of Christ.

So tonight we conclude our time of covenantal education which has so shaped us, and so prepared us for the crucifying, sanctifying life that awaits us. Parents, teachers, and all the rest, we thank you for this solid foundation, this reformed worldview which we can carry with us. We covet your prayers as we hold fast to God's gracious promises that it is Christ that works in us, and who will guide us in the way of holiness and life.



### **Class Text Galatians 2:20**

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.



#### **Amy Kaiser**

A few years ago, I was sitting in a classroom when a teacher asked me this question: "Do you want to be here?" This is a question that would be appropriate for all of us to ask ourselves from time to time. Are you content with where God has placed you and called you to be? Because often, as we run the race that is set before us, we become so weighed down with the burdens and responsibilities of this life that we forget what a blessing it is to be able to serve

God in the calling He has given us. Just think, we have the power of Christ living in us so that we can do everything that He has called us to do in this life, yet we often take this for granted and, rather than being thankful, we murmur and complain about the difficulties of our situation.

This is also true for us in the past four years of our covenant education. I know I'm not the only one who sometimes was so overwhelmed by the work and responsibilities placed on me that I forgot what a blessing our Reformed education really is. By God's grace and faithfulness, we had the opportunity to come to a Christian school every day for the past four years to learn more about our heavenly Father so that we could grow in our relationship with Him. Our teachers led us not only in gaining knowledge, but also in seeking wisdom and establishing a firm foundation on which we can build the rest of our lives. What a blessing!

#### **Kara Minderhoud**

The additional blessedness of our Reformed education is realized in the distinctiveness by which we pattern our lives. As stated in our class text, Christ lives in us. The life that we live, we live in Him, by His marvelous gift of faith. This is the heart and soul of what defines us. We are not defined by our earthly characteristics; we are defined by the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts. And this indwelling of the Spirit characterizes each and every one of us as members of the Kingdom of Christ.

What a high calling we have as members of this Kingdom. We represent the name of the Almighty; our walk must reflect this, especially after we leave the confines of Covenant. We are leaving the accountability of teachers and classmates to glorify God, but we are still accountable to the omniscient God. Our walk does not change. It must not change. We continually bear the name of Christ. The life we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God. The Son of God. The one who died for us, who saved us, and who reigns eternally at the right hand of God on our behalf. Keep this at the forefront of your mind always.



This spiritual foundation is the distinctiveness of the education that we have received. Don't take it for granted. Be thankful. Rejoice. And understand that with the education and foundation comes a high calling. A calling to uphold the great and holy name of our God. A calling to witness to those around us that we are different. A calling to faithfully utilize the gifts we've been given for the glory of God.

Our formal Reformed education has come to a close, but we must not leave behind the truths that have been learned. Instead, grow. Grow in knowledge, grow in faith, grow in your covenant friendship with God. So as we go forward in the days, weeks, months, and years to come, we must remain distinctive. There was a purpose in the education that we've received. We are different, we are God's.

#### **Devin Hiemstra**

We have received a Reformed education, and we are now called to use that education to live distinct from the rest of the world. The question is how?

I would like to answer that question by telling you about moving walk-ways such as those you would use to get from one terminal to the next in an airport.

With that picture in your mind, I would now like you to consider three scenarios: In the first place, consider what would happen if you were to stand in a stationary position on that walk-way. How would you move? You would move backwards at a rate equivalent to the speed of the walk-way. You're not exerting yourself, and as a result, you're being pushed back. By standing stationary, we are not living distinctive from the rest of the world. Rather, we are giving into the world's temptations, we are being carried into darkness, and we are growing farther apart from God. We must not stand still.

In the second place, consider what would happen if you were to move forward at a speed equal to the opposing movement of the walk-way. Your net velocity would be zero. Although you would be exerting yourself to an extent, you still would not be getting anywhere. For some of us, this may have been the rhythm that we fell into while at high school. We were guided in prayer and could explain our Reformed faith in enough detail to defend the Truth, but no conscious effort was taken to grow in a deeper understanding of our faith. We only did enough to get by. This is not what it means to be distinct. It is not enough for us to live as Christians only when it is convenient and easy.

Finally, in the third place, consider what would happen if you were to move faster than the opposing speed of the walk-way. You would be overcoming its movement and would be moving forward despite the relentless effort of the walk-way to push you back. This is where you and I should be. We should be striving to grow spiritually, to take what we've learned and to live out our confession. This is what it means to be distinct. We must overcome the powerful force of the world and fix our eyes on the One who will give us strength. Do not fret, do not fear. God's grace is steadfast and His faithfulness is sure. He will lead us to the end.

Class of 2016, don't stand still. Don't walk at a comfortable pace. Run! Not of your own might, but in the power of Christ which lives in you.



## **Teacher Profile - Mr. Dan Van Uffelen**

### **1. Can you tell us a little about your background and how long have you been a teacher at Covenant Christian High School?**

Born and raised in Holland, Michigan, I have been a lifelong member of the Protestant Reformed Churches. My parents, John and Linda Van Uffelen, saw to it that I received a Christian education at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, Heritage Christian School, and Covenant Christian High School. From there I acquired a teaching degree at Grand Valley State University and am presently completing a master's degree at Calvin College.

After graduating from college, I married Kate Engelsma, and we moved to South Holland, Illinois after I accepted a teaching position at Heritage Christian High School for its very first year of operation. Developing course curriculum, teaching a wide variety of classes, and enjoying a small school atmosphere, these years shaped me profoundly as a teacher. After ten memorable years, I was hired to teach here at Covenant Christian High School. For the past five years, I have been teaching religion and English courses at Covenant.

I am presently a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church. The Lord has blessed my wife and I with seven wonderful children: Jake, Emma, Dirk, Ruby, Hazel, Lucy, and Isaak. We live in the Hope Ghetto, which means that church, school, and home are always just a short walk away.



### **2. What is most rewarding aspect about being a teacher? What is the hardest thing about being a teacher?**

Give me students with passion for Christian education! When I see students excited about learning, enthusiastic about the subject, and eager to put it into practice, I am absolutely thrilled. This has to be one of the most rewarding aspects about being a teacher. I don't think students realize how much their enthusiasm means to a teacher. Lively students make good teachers; just as inspirational teachers make good students. Learning is a relationship. Iron sharpens iron! But the flip side of that coin is also true. The hardest and most discouraging thing to encounter is student apathy. I have looked into the faces of students, and I have seen indifference. It's painful to behold, and one of the most difficult things to understand. However, by God's grace, it's also something that a child of God is able to overcome.

### **3. What advice would you give to incoming teachers?**

Be yourself, have fun with your students, and buckle down and bury yourself in your work! Read a new book related to your subject every year in order to stay fresh. It is impossible to pull out last year's notes and to teach your material with the same enthusiasm you had the year before. You must stimulate your own understanding of your subject in a new way every year. If you don't, your teaching will be stale. You will sense it. Your students will notice too. I firmly believe that effective teachers must always remember that they are also students.

### **4. What noteworthy experiences helped shape you as a teacher?**

Fresh out of college, I accepted a teaching position at Heritage Christian High School for its very first year. The school had just three teachers (including Mr. Ralph Medema, Mrs. Sue Looyenga, and me) and fifteen students. Ten years later, when I accepted a teaching position at Covenant Christian High School, Heritage had doubled in its teaching staff and its student body had tripled. I count it as one of the great blessings of my life to have witnessed the birth, early development, and blossoming maturity of a Protestant Reformed Christian high school. During these formative years, I came to appreciate the role of our schools even more, and I grew personally and professionally in manifold ways. God has certainly blessed our Protestant Reformed communities with an appreciation and a commitment to Christian education.

### **5. What is your favorite subject to teach and why.**

My favorite subject to teach has always been church history. I remember my first faculty meeting a few months before Heritage Christian High School opened its doors in 2001. The time had come to decide how we were

going to teach over fifteen high school subjects with just three teachers. We took turns claiming the available classes. As an English major with a minor in geography, I was happy to be assigned English grammar and world geography. However, my assignment also included three subjects that I had never anticipated teaching: geometry, computer applications, and church history. The challenge was daunting. I survived computer applications by placing a computer savvy student next to me in the lab. I survived geometry by a slavish dependence upon the teacher's edition of the textbook and by sheer skulduggery. Math was never my strong suit.

Church history, however, was a welcome surprise! Although I still had much to learn, I enjoyed the subject immensely from the start. Equipped with a copy of Bruce L. Shelley's *Church History in Plain Language*, B.K. Kuiper's *The Church in History*, and Prof. Herman Hanko's *Portraits of Faithful Saints*, I slaved away at the curriculum and my lesson plans. To my great delight, the students responded enthusiastically to the class, and I enjoyed delving into 2,000 years of ecclesiastical turmoil and triumph. After fifteen years of teaching church history, Polycarp, Augustine, Gottschalk, Alcuin, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Gomar, DeCock, and Hoeksema seem like old friends.



I enjoy teaching church history because it is the supreme excuse for storytelling. The subject is also fascinating, practical, and vitally important for every child of God. Throughout my years as a high school church history teacher, I have come to appreciate more fully God's providential care for His people. I pray that my students have too. The Lord has impressed upon me the supreme importance of understanding the history of Christ's church. In order to defend the faith against the heretics of our own day, students need to be guided by the Spirit-led theologians of the past who refuted the wolves of their own. Students need to realize that just as God directed the lives of his people throughout history, so he providentially governs their own lives as well. Furthermore, students need to be trained to see that Christ and his church are at the center of world history, and that they are a part of a riveting story with a triumphant conclusion.

#### **6. What is something your students have taught you?**

Sometimes the little things make the biggest difference. As teachers, we exert ourselves in order to carefully craft our lessons each day. But often it's the unplanned, unexpected, and spontaneous comments and gestures that leave the strongest impression on our students.

#### **7. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing students today?**

The greatest challenge students face today is a tidal wave of digital distractions and non-digital diversions from things that matter most. Consequently, most students are not reading like they should be, and this is a problem that affects every area of life. Our students need to learn how to make time for intellectual and spiritual pursuits, and they need to learn to cultivate their tastes. Philippians 4:8 puts it this way: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue; if there be any praise, think on these things."

#### **8. What do you like to do in your free time and why do you enjoy doing it?**

I style myself a treasure hunter. (In fact, I'm doing that now. If you have any memorabilia you'd like to contribute to my church history museum, please let me know. Old artifacts, documents, and pictures are most welcome!) I enjoy sailing with family and friends. Sailing is a great allegory for life; it offers an opportunity for quiet reflection in the grandeur of God's creation; it reminds me how small I am; and there's something poetic about navigating the sea by harnessing the wind and the waves! I like to read classic literature and biography. *A Tale of Two Cities* is the best novel ever written! I also like to brew beer. So did Martin Luther.

**FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**  
**Travis Van Bemmel**



The 2015-16 school year officially came to an end on June 4. The baseball and softball teams both fell in the MHSAA District Finals on that date. As the school year ends, it gives us an opportunity to look back, and also look forward to the 2016-17 school year. We had some very memorable events during the past school year. The volleyball "Purple Game" to benefit research at the VanAndel Institute was a great event.

The winter sports saw the largest crowd that has been to a basketball during my time here at Covenant. The teams took on Calvin Christian on that Friday, but the Main Event of the evening was the return of the "Special Needs" game. It was very memorable night for all participants and fans.

In April, we hosted what has become my favorite event of the year: the baseball games at 5/3 BallPark. Once again, we had the largest high school crowd of the year at the stadium. Thank You for your support of these special events! These events present special opportunities for our athletes, teams, and our supporters.

We look forward to the 2016-17 sports seasons at Covenant. The fall sports teams will officially begin practice on August 10, less than two months away. We ask for your continued support of Covenant Christian Athletics. The Athletic Department has a new website, and I encourage you to check this out when you get the opportunity. [www.covenantchristianathletics.org](http://www.covenantchristianathletics.org)



**Girls Varsity Basketball State Champs**

