

THE COURIER

WINTER
2016

Published by the Board of
COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

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Covenant Christian High School Choirs
One Voice in Praise



*O sing unto the Lord a new song;
sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Sing unto the Lord, bless his name;
show forth his salvation from day to day.*
Psalm 96:1-2



At the recent PRTI Teachers' Convention, Rev. Jon Mahtani gave the keynote address based on Ephesians 4:4-6. There we read, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." In his speech, Rev. Mahtani encouraged us to strive for unity within the schools. The text stresses our calling to be united to each other as part of the body and to be united in the work that we do as we live to bring glory to His name. We were encouraged by the phrase "in you all" as it emphasizes that God walks with us and provides the daily grace that we need to do the work. That grace is necessary because the church is a gathering of many diverse members who come together and unify for the purpose of worship. The school is also greatly in need of that daily grace to complete its work to the glory of God. Teachers, who are diverse in so many ways, yet who are all servants of God dedicated to teaching, must come together each day to take up the work of instructing the children and young people that come to the school. The parents and homes that send students to the school are also diverse in many ways. Parents come from many different walks of life, with different upbringings and experiences in life. The homes that they establish have different routines, rules, and expectations for the children. Yet, by God's grace, these parents and homes are able to band together with other parents and homes to provide for the education of their children. The students also come to the school with diverse personalities, abilities, learning styles, and goals (or lack thereof) for life. Through all of this diversity we have a calling to be unified in our approach to the rearing of our children in the school.

For this article I would like to expand on a couple of thoughts that came to mind after reflecting on this speech. Please consider this foundational thought of unity, by God working "through all, and in you all," as it applies to two aspects of our schools. The first aspect is that of a unity of purpose, that is, the reason why we do what we do. The second aspect is that of having a unity of practice or how do we go about our work to show that unity.

Unity of Purpose

Through all of this diversity, the parents of the school come together to provide the means necessary to assist them in the rearing of their children. They are compelled to do this through the exhortation of Scripture

IN THIS ISSUE:

Administrator's Report	Page 2
Board President	Page 4
Education Committee	Page 5
Finance Committee	Page 6
Long Range Planning	Page 7
Building Committee	Page 8
Foundation Committee	Page 9
Enrollment Committee	Page 9
Beyond Singing	Page 10
Welcome New Teachers	Page 12
Fall Festival	Page 13
Teacher Profile	Page 14
Athletic Director's Report	Page 16

(Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78, Ephesians 6) as well as the Reformed creeds and the baptismal vows that they take. They become part of a society of like-minded parents who set up and operate a school. With the school in place, they commit themselves to serving this goal together by supporting the society and submitting their individual desires, thoughts, and goals to those of the group. As parents, we may have our own views on how things ought to go and it takes daily grace to trust those who are working on our behalf. This unity of purpose is truly a unity of the hearts of those who send their children to the schools. God is working "through all, and in you all." As parents we can only maintain unity within our schools if we have a strong union with God and we maintain that by being constant in God's Word and in prayer.

Unity of Practice

When our young people come into school each day, not only do they experience unity with the same essential purpose, but they also ought to be able to experience a unity of practice. By this I do not mean that everyone has to do the same thing or even have the same experience each day. It does not mean that all the teachers have to teach in the same way, have the same requirements, or interact with the students in the same way. It does not mean that the students have to take all of the same classes, although there may be some required core classes and common themes that are carried through the years that all students are involved in. Unity of practice points the students to understand that there is wholeness to life and that every part of the life of a child of God is connected to all the other parts. It seems

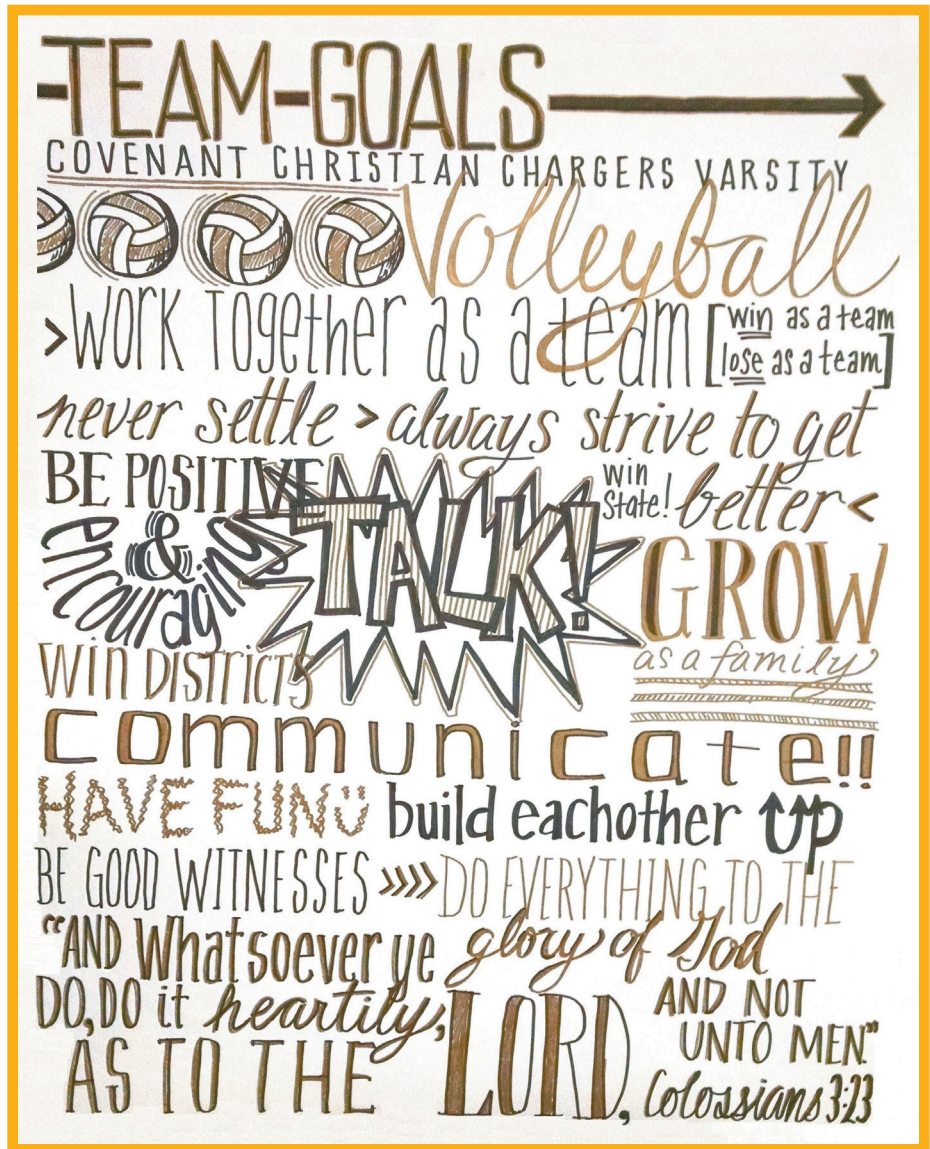
natural for us to break things up into smaller parts so that we can better understand. We take the entire body of the curriculum and break it into departments for the efficiency of teaching and learning. There are English classes, Science classes, Math classes, and other subjects that are taught by teachers who specialize in those areas. However, it is important that our students leave our schools with an understanding of how these things all work together. We should emphasize in our curriculum the interdisciplinary nature of what God reveals to us in the creation and in the work of His hand in all the other areas of study. This is done so that the students gain insight and understanding of how “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

This concept of unity in practice can be more fully developed with the students when this unity of purpose motivates parents to connect the life of the home with the life of the school. When parents take an interest in what the students are learning (even if they don't fully understand it) and also in what they are doing inside and outside of school, it adds to that dimension of the wholeness of life. It is often through these conversations (essential communication!) that parents can relate their experience in these matters to the children and help them make connections to other parts of life. The parent is also the common denominator that can help the child apply what he has heard in the sermon on Sunday or in the catechism lesson for the week to his life at school and in other areas of life.

Many of these thoughts are illustrated in a motivational poster that was made by varsity assistant coach Kelli Van Overloop and placed in the locker room at the beginning of the Volleyball season. (See picture) This seems to sum up the thoughts on unity of practice as it incorporates many facets into the overall “life” of the volleyball team. The statements on this poster cover many different activities of the team as they go through the volleyball season, all of which point to the goal of the glory of God. This poster incorporates the ideas of working and growing together, communicating with each other, developing oneself (for the betterment of the whole), encouraging and building each other up, and enjoying the experience. All of this is centered on being good witnesses and doing it to the glory of God. “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” (Colossians. 3:23)

These themes stated for the Volleyball teams can be

echoed in any subject or activity that goes on in the school. If we think this way and do these things, we can avoid the compartmentalizing of religion in the curriculum and in the life of the students. Our goal is to make the students conscious of the spiritual nature of each subject and activity of the school and of every part of our life. We are true to this calling when we make Scripture the center of the work that we do in the school. May God grant us the wisdom, the desire, and the ability to shape our school around these aspects of unity so that all the glory may go to Him.



Master's Degree Achieved

We congratulate Mr. Joel Noorman and Mr. Dan Van Uffelen for completing the necessary requirements for a Master's Degree. They both completed programs this summer through Calvin College in the area of Curriculum and Instruction. These programs involve the completion of extensive reading and writing requirements for the teachers as they work through the 30 credit hours. (10 graduate level classes) We are thankful for their commitment to grow in their understanding of the work of teaching and to develop their gifts as teachers.

FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD
Nicholas Kleyn, President



As the school year progresses, the School Board is very thankful to see that things are going well at CCHS. The School Board has the duty to make sure the school continues to run efficiently and that good Bible based instruction is taught in each of the classrooms. We can reassure the supporters and parents of CCHS that we feel that this is the case. We have a dedicated administrator that works tirelessly to make sure that the school functions well, day to day. We have dedicated teachers that make sure good Christian teaching is instilled in the classroom. We have dedicated staff members who work to make sure other aspects of the school run smoothly. We give a special word of thanks to our administrator, teachers and staff and pray that they continue to work diligently and faithfully. We recognize that particular things need improving and we realize that there are better ways to do certain tasks; but the School Board takes these responsibilities seriously and will continue to work on these concerns.

It is good to see that the work of the school board goes on faithfully year by year. These men work behind the scenes in the running of the school to make sure budgets are met, the building is maintained, that we have good teachers, that classroom visits are conducted and that good decisions are made in regards to many other aspects of the running of the school. It is good to see the nine men who do this volunteer work, working without complaint or division and working quietly and faithfully in their roles. I count it a privilege to work and serve with these men.

The last time I served on the school board was in the spring of 2011, and I would like to reflect on some of the changes I have observed since I last served. When I was completing my last term in 2011, the school was a much different place than it is now. We were busy making plans to bring the 9th grade students from the four feeder schools. The school board was just about to start the process of hiring more teachers for the ninth grade students. The curriculum was being revised to add 9th grade classes to CCHS. We had just started to break ground for the 10 new classrooms, bathrooms and locker rooms that we were adding to the school. The student population was at 240 students and we had 25 teachers and staff.

Six years later things have changed and the work of the school board seems much more routine. For a start, the school board meetings seem shorter and there seem to be less meetings to attend! I'm good with that.

Some of the other changes I observe are as follows.

1. The school is a lot bigger. It has 10 additional classrooms, new locker rooms and more storage rooms. You can almost get lost!
2. We have a total of 39 teachers and staff members, an increase of 14 since 2011. There are many new faces at the school, some I know and some I still have to get to know better.
3. We now have a total of 372 students from 254 families. There were 240 students from 205 families in 2011, an increase of around 130 students.
4. The old teacher lounge/board room is now the Academic support room.
5. The office has a brand new location and layout and now has two full time staff positions.
6. The Special Education program now has their own classroom, teachers, and a presence in the school. This is great to see.
7. We have a full time counseling staff and office. This is serving the students very well.
8. We have a training and weight room for the sports program and much better bathrooms and locker rooms.
9. It is good to see the tuition sliding scale that we put into place is working. We spent many hours in 2010-2011 trying to come up with the sliding scale, so it is good to see that even with a sliding scale the budget is met and that the families with multiple students can get a bit of a break in tuition costs.
10. We can see that managing and keeping track of 372 students is a lot more work than managing 240 students!

So many changes have been made, but one thing that has not changed is the way our teachers continue to teach their classes from a reformed biblical perspective. For this we can be very thankful. The Board covets your prayers and continued support of the school as we endeavor to teach our covenant children. We give thanks for his faithfulness in providing us, as parents, the ways and means to teach our children in a good Christian School.



FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD
Eugene Kamps, Education Committee



When this copy of the Courier is distributed, the 49th year of covenantal instruction to the youth here at Covenant Christian High School will be well on its way. Take a moment to reflect on that - nearly a half a century. From a small beginning to what it is today, now some 372 students receive Reformed covenantal instruction from like faith teachers, staff and administrator. We reflect not on what we have accomplished in and of ourselves, but instead on what our covenant heavenly Father has done through us by His grace and mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a privilege it is for us to have the call to bring up the youth in the doctrines of the Scripture and the Reformed creeds in a school where the teachers and board members have a spiritual love and concern for the covenant youth. We thank God for this rich blessing he has given us.

The Education Committee, for the 2016-2017 school year, consists of Nicholas Kleyn, David Meulenberg, Doug Bleyenburch, Rick Noorman, and Eugene Kamps. The new committee members are Nicholas Kleyn and David Meulenberg replacing the retired members John Flikkema and David Moelker. The purpose of the Education Committee is to advise and make recommendations to the full Board on the educational programs and policies of the Society. The world we live in is becoming increasingly godless and sin is becoming more rampant and acceptable. Because of this, the policies of our school must be very clear and distinct so that there can be no misunderstanding of what we stand for and for what purpose we exist. Our statement of faith and mission is to be expressed not only for a clear understanding for us, but also to serve as clear evidence to others of those beliefs that we hold to, should they be questioned. We are to be faithful to God, His Word, and the calling given to us as parents to instruct the covenant youth in the fear and honor of His name. As the days grow more evil, we can expect our policies and statements of belief to be challenged and tried by those who despise the Word of God. Let us be faithful to our calling to instruct the youth and prepare them for the days to come. Therein, we honor and glorify God in all things.

The school year is now into its second 9 week marking period and is progressing very well as the teachers, staff, and students are settling into their daily routine. We have two new teachers, Mr. Karl Dykstra and Mr. Ethan Mingerink, who are adjusting to the busy schedule of school. Karl comes to us from Heritage Christian

School where he taught at the elementary level. Ethan is new to teaching and teaches Spanish I classes. Rick Noorman reported that both enjoy their work and appreciate the support they are getting from their fellow colleagues. We also have two student teachers, Mr. Matt Elzinga and Mrs. Emily Boerson, who are student teaching in the first nine week period. Emily enjoyed working with Miss Jennifer Knott and Matt with Mr. Tom Bergman. Rick Noorman reported that both were enthusiastic and did very well in the classroom.

This past summer our teachers have been busy working on CED (Coarse Enrichment and Development) projects. These projects allow the teachers to upgrade, modify and supplement course material for use in the classroom. We have 4 teachers who completed CED's. Kyle Bruinooge prepared two CEDs; the first in New Testament Survey and the second in Algebra I. Megan VanOverloop, Joel Noorman, and Karl Dykstra, who all teach 9th grade World History, collaborated on a project to clarify the content and the goals of this course. Matt Elzinga prepared videos to be used as guides demonstrating common practices in Computer Applications. Rick DeVries' CED created new and converted existing assessments for Government and Modern World History so that they can be administered online. We would like to express our appreciation for all the work that our teachers do to keep material current in the classroom.

Rick Noorman, our Administrator, is also busy in the day-to-day operation of the school. Every month he reports to the Board on his activities and workings about the school. This past summer he completed the requirements for the renewal of his administrative certificate. Rick is now certified until the year 2021. Rick, along with the input from the teachers, has put a manual together entitled, "Counseling: A Work of the Christian School Teacher". This will be another tool for the teachers to use to help students when the need arises.

We would like to thank the teachers, staff and administrator for the work, effort, and time they put forth aiding the parents in the instruction of the covenant youth. It takes a lot of effort and work to make Covenant Christian High operate as smoothly as it does.

The Education Committee covets your prayers for our administrator, teachers, staff, the students, and the Board. May the instruction of the students prepare them for their place in the church and vocation wherein the Lord might lead them, and may God be honored and glorified in all things.



Profit & Loss Budget Performance

July 2015 Through June 2016

In this issue of the Courier, we present the financial report for the last fiscal year and we have much reason for giving thanks. We are thankful for the ongoing commitment of our tuition paying families, seeing to it that their tuition is paid in a timely manner. This is evident on the financial report, where you can see that we met, even exceeded our budgeted tuition for the year. We are thankful, too, for the continued financial support of many who do not have children attending CCHS. The generosity of young people who recently graduated, as well as many whose children have completed their education here is seen in that we came in over budget in both the support drive and church collections for the year. We are thankful for the good stewardship shown by all involved in the operation of the school, so that our expenses came in close to what was budgeted for the year, helping us end the year with a surplus. Most of all we are thankful to our heavenly Father, who supplies the means, and also works in the hearts of many a strong commitment for the covenant instruction that takes place here at CCHS.

For this year, we have once again increased the budgeted amount for our support drive, to \$325,000. We recently began the annual support drive. The money raised through this support drive helps us keep tuition as affordable as possible for our families, many of whom have two or three students here at Covenant and also students in our grade schools. We ask that you prayerfully consider this need in your year-end giving, and throughout the school year.

Shortly before we began the annual support drive, we launched a capital drive for the five classroom addition. This project was approved at the annual society meeting earlier this year. You can read more about the project elsewhere in this publication. The goal for this capital drive is \$800,000, which is the full amount approved for the project. We hope to have funds in hand by the beginning of June 2017 when the project starts. By achieving this goal, we will not have to increase our current debt load. But it is important that these drives be considered separately, as the annual

	<u>Jul '15 - Jun 16</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
INCOME			
4110 · Tuition	2,045,960	1,999,250	46,710
4200 · Church Collections	66,967	60,000	6,967
4300 · Pledges & gifts	342,568	295,000	47,568
4350 · CCHS Foundation Receipts	26,798	26,800	(2)
4450 · Special Education Receipts	94,728	92,100	2,628
4600 · Miscellaneous Receipts	2,549	6,100	(3,551)
4604 · Interest Income	1,740	-	1,740
TOTAL INCOME	2,581,310	2,479,250	102,060
EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES			
5010 · Teaching & administration	1,281,354	1,263,000	18,354
5030 · Substitute Teachers	900	1,000	(100)
5035 · Teacher Assistants	31,983	27,500	4,483
5040 · Office Staff	40,523	39,500	1,023
5050 · Athletic Director & Coaches	48,755	48,700	55
5110 · Payroll Taxes	106,769	116,100	(9,331)
5125 · Teachers' Retirement expense	37,734	44,000	(6,266)
5135 · Special Education	130,903	121,800	9,103
6110 · Teaching aids & supplies	16,887	14,000	2,887
6120 · Educational equipment	14,611	16,000	(1,389)
6122 · Technology fund	20,000	20,000	-
6130 · Physical education equipment	354	1,000	(646)
6140 · Library	4,100	4,100	-
6150 · Science lab supplies	6,172	6,000	172
6170 · Teachers' development	13,934	13,000	934
6180 · Music	3,419	3,500	(81)
6190 · Band instruments	3,500	3,500	0
	1,761,898	1,742,700	19,198
INSURANCE EXPENSES			
5120 · Group insurance coverage	240,000	240,000	-
5130 · Workers' compensation insurance	6,207	4,800	1,407
6040 · General insurance	14,876	15,000	(124)
	261,083	259,800	1,283

BUILDING EXPENSES

5020 · Custodial services	56,672	56,500	172
5025 · Maintenance Wages	11,956	20,000	(8,044)
5110.1 · Payroll taxes - custodial	4,224	4,350	(126)
6000 · Utilities	58,154	62,000	(3,846)
6025 · Water improvements assessment	4,265	4,300	(35)
6050 · Janitorial supplies	8,014	8,000	14
6060 · Snow removal	5,350	5,000	350
6062 · Trash removal	1,425	1,000	425
6065 · Grounds maintenance	17,000	17,000	-
6070 · General maintenance	48,044	40,000	8,044
6080 · Major maintenance program	54,000	54,000	-
6090 · Building furnishings	3,658	5,000	(1,342)
	<u>272,761</u>	<u>277,150</u>	<u>(4,389)</u>

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

6030 · Telephone	5,660	6,000	(340)
6145 · Copier replacement	2,500	2,500	-
6160 · Equipment repair & replacement	1,251	3,000	(1,749)
6210 · Transportation expenses	888	2,000	(1,112)
6220 · Office supplies	4,870	6,500	(1,630)
6222 · Equipment service contracts	7,292	9,000	(1,708)
6225 · Publicity & printing cost	2,464	2,500	(36)
6230 · Postage	1,941	4,500	(2,559)
6240 · Federation dues	1,747	2,300	(553)
6245 · Graduation expenses	3,768	3,500	268
6250 · Accounting fees	6,685	4,200	2,485
6260 · Miscellaneous expenses	6,770	4,600	2,170
6300 · Property Acquisition	44,000	44,000	-
6310 · Debt obligations - facilities	105,000	105,000	-
	<u>194,836</u>	<u>199,600</u>	<u>(4,764)</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES

	<u>2,490,578</u>	<u>2,479,250</u>	<u>11,238</u>
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NET INCOME

	<u>90,732</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>90,732</u>
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support drive is still needed to meet the operations of the school for the year.

One of the main tasks of the finance committee is the tracking of tuition payments, which is an ongoing job each month. By the end of December your tuition for the year should be at least 50% paid. We now email tuition statements near the beginning of each month (usually by the 10th), so please make sure you are staying current. If you do not receive your statements or if you have questions, you can contact a member of the finance committee. We also would like to hear from you if you are falling behind, so that an acceptable payment plan can be arranged.

We ask that you continue to keep our committee, along with the Board in your prayers, and join with us in giving thanks to our Heavenly Father for His covenant faithfulness and goodness toward us.



We don't have to climb the tallest tree and peer into the distance to see that our grade schoolers will become high schoolers very soon. It sounds far away to say 2026, but it will sneak up on us in a hurry. By taking the current number of students in our feeder schools, we can make our enrollment projections for Covenant Christian High School. Our five classroom addition will begin, the Lord willing in June 2017 and be ready to use later that year. This will provide the school enough classrooms to comfortably teach about 475 students. The Long Range Planning Committee and the Board are truly thankful to God for the steadfast commitment of our families and supporters.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Projected # of Students</u>
2016 - 17	372
2017 - 18	381
2018 - 19	387
2019 - 20	400
2020 - 21	403
2021 - 22	411
2022 - 23	433
2023 - 24	459
2024 - 25	462
2025 - 26	496



As we start a new school year we are pleased to report that we are gearing up to begin a new building project again. Only four short years ago we finished up with a large addition to our school when we brought the 9th grade in.

So why do we need to keep doing this? Why does it feel like we are constantly being asked to step up for another building addition drive? Does it never end? Why can't we get a break once? Maybe it's someone else's turn to give to this building drive. My kids are out of CCHS, I did my due diligence, now it is time for the next generation to step up. Has anyone NOT asked themselves these questions? How about if we ask ourselves a different set of questions.

What would happen if the support for our Christian schools dried up? Where would our children (or for many of us our grandchildren) go to school? Another Christian school? A local public school? Really? Are these even options? Do we want our children and grandchildren getting their education anywhere but at CCHS? No you say. Then what must we do to make sure that doesn't happen? I think every one of us knows the answer. This leaves us with only one option; our own beloved CCHS is where we want our children to attend.

OK. How are we going to do that? It takes money. Where does that money come from? Yes, tuition is a start, but that doesn't even cover operating cost, let alone building projects. Do we increase tuition to cover this and put that burden on those who can least afford it at this time? Not a great option. So where is the rest of it going to come from? Does it just appear out of thin air and show up in the General Fund? Do we just assume the donors with deep pockets will step up?

Or do we ALL step back and ask ourselves this one fundamental question: What does the Lord require of ME today? Have I met that requirement? When we ask THIS question and we are honest with ourselves I suspect many of us will admit we fall short of that which is required. Many of us would rather take those dollars and invest it in ourselves rather than in our children. Why would we do that? Honestly...

But... thanks be to our God that for almost 50 years now our supporters have been willing to "dig deep" for yet another building project. What a testimony to the commitment of our people to make sure that good, solid Reformed Education continues at CCHS.

Let us show our thankfulness...AGAIN... for our Lord's unfailing faithfulness and unbounded mercy that He has given to us, both spiritually and yes, monetarily.

So where exactly are we at with the new addition? We are currently waiting for State approval. As soon as we get that we will let out the prints for bid, probably right after the new year. We are planning D.V. to start construction after the students get out of school in June and hope to be finished up by late fall. We are also looking at plans to make additional space for our Special Education program at the same time but we don't have these plans completely formalized yet.

We should have a lot more to report on in our next Courier when things start rolling in the spring so stay tuned!

Lots of good stuff going on.... AGAIN!
Thank God for our CCHS.

Former Student Receives Special Recognition

Alyssa Scholten, a junior at Calvin College, is the recipient of the Elite 90 award for the 2016 NCAA Division III Women's Volleyball Championship. Alyssa has a 4.0 GPA and is currently majoring in Speech Pathology. Scholten is only the fifth Calvin student-athlete to ever receive the award.

The Elite 90 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's championships and who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in his or her sport.

Eligible student-athletes are sophomores or above who have participated in their sport for at least two years with their school. They must be an active member of the team, traveling and a designated member of the squad size at the championship.



FROM THE FOUNDATION
Dewey Engelsma, Secretary



The work of supporting Christian education can be difficult and costly. This is the experience of any parent that has sent their child to a Christian school. It is work that requires the support of an entire community, both “elbow grease” and financial support. This support comes from many different areas. Men and women from diverse backgrounds, businesses that provide a myriad of goods and services, parents, grandparents, and generous individuals, all combine their efforts and money so that Covenant Christian High School can exist and perform her work. The CCHS Foundation is just one piece of that puzzle, and, like the other pieces, it is an important one.

The Foundation conducts two fundraisers throughout the year, a golf outing and a dinner (Taste of Covenant). Our supporters will be interested to know that the most recent golf outing raised over \$22,000 for the Foundation, an increase of \$6,000 over last year! These fundraisers are important as they allow us to give between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per year to the school without having to invade the principal of the invested assets. In addition, they function well as community building events.

As a board, our desire is to grow the balance of the two funds we manage, the endowment fund and the general fund. This is our desire because we recognize that as the balances grow our gifts to the school can grow as well. In order to grow these balances we need additional donations beyond that which is brought in by our two fundraisers. You have heard us request many times to be considered when you do your estate planning. You are aware of the assistance that is offered through the Barnabas Foundation as you do your estate planning. And we are confident that some of our constituents are doing just that. However, for those of you that are on the fence, consider this; when you give to the Foundation you are giving to an organization that is designed to provide support not only for your children, and your grandchildren, but also to the generations following. Perhaps to generations that require the financial assistance even more than the current one. Also, you can be confident that the Foundation consists of men who are careful and prudent when overseeing the assets of the organization and who take their fiduciary responsibility seriously. We are called to be stewards and we live in that consciousness.

The work that goes on by the Foundation is important; as is all of the work that is done on the behalf of Covenant Christian High School. But the work is all in vain if it is

done apart from the blessing of our Heavenly Father. So we give our God thanks for the gifts He has given us, and ask for his blessing upon all of our work.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17)

FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD
Mark Ophoff, Enrollment Committee



With grateful hearts to our God, we had the blessing and privilege of interviewing and welcoming our new families. We conducted these interviews this past June and July. We reviewed our Mission Statement, Basis of Belief, and Admission Policies with each family. We are happy that we witnessed a deep commitment and love for our schools and the Reformed Faith. We also did not detect any contradictions in Christian commitment or lifestyle that would prevent enrollment into our school. Following are the new families:

- Andrew & Ruth Baas (Brianna) Grandville PRC
- Wayne & Brenda Bleyenbergh (Titus) Hope PRC
- James & Tami Boorsma (Sieger) Byron Center PRC
- Steve & Rosie Bylisma (Joel) Trinity PRC
- Chad & Michelle Corson (Deeana) Grandville PRC
- Michael & Lisa DeBoer (Jenna) Grandville PRC
- Jeff & Angela DeVries (Kaylie) Trinity PRC
- Phil & Janet Doezema (Jacob) Byron Center PRC
- Matt & Jessica Dykstra (Cody) Trinity PRC
- Dewey & Dawn Engelsma (Lillian) Grandville PRC
- Wes & Rhonda Fisher (Meghan) Trinity PRC
- Aaron & Erin Gunnink (Drew) Trinity PRC
- Michael & Heidi Haveman (Ethan) Hudsonville PRC
- Joshua & Sharla Hoekstra (Michael) Hudsonville PRC
- Joel & Lanae Holstege (Lindsey) Faith PRC
- Tom & Fiona Holstege (Lily) Trinity PRC
- Jason & Amanda Jabaay (Ellyse) Southeast PRC
- Terry & Pamela Kaptein (Emily) Byron Center PRC
- David & Susan King (Caleb & David) Trinity PRC
- Brian & Tara Koole (Mitchel) Faith PRC
- Brad & Esther Langerak (Carter) Grandville PRC
- Patrick & Jennifer Lenting (Brooke) Trinity PRC
- Brendan & Kelly Looyenga (Mikala) Faith PRC
- Jeremy & Tressa Lubbers (Paige) Byron Center PRC
- James & Melanie Molenkamp (Laura) Faith PRC
- Kevin & Sally Timmerman (Kate) Georgetown PRC
- Tom & Christy Verstrate (Thomas) Georgetown PRC

Please welcome these new families to our school.

Passing through the cracks of the doors in the music room, permeating the air throughout the school, a cornucopia of noises fills the atmosphere as students and director engage in experimenting with sounds...colors...timbres, playing with layers of vocal and body percussion, instrumental sounds, and beautiful melodies, digging through theory, making evaluations, analyzing structure, all to better serve the purpose of creating and understanding music...and finally taking that knowledge and using it to bring glory heavenward. While every singer is shepherded through this intense process in the music room and eventually for a concert that is seemingly contained in an



"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." — Luther

auditorium, one of God's purposes for our singing

sometimes fades into the back of our minds. A greater purpose. A larger witness. Further than the walls of the choir room. Beyond the constraints of the performance hall.

Occasionally, our limited understanding prohibits us from fully realizing God's plan for our music and how it serves His world-wide church. Whereas each of God's children's lives are used as a witness in different capacities (some to co-workers, others through written literature, words spoken or day-to-day walk) God has shown to use music at CCHS in volumes that reach to the 'ends of the earth'. In light of this, this article will help explain how the past

three years of singing have witnessed to people of all walks and beliefs around the world.

Through the means of our YouTube channel, CovenantCHOIRS, tens of thousands (possibly hundreds of thousands) of people have watched, worshiped, and praised our Lord through the music. (This year the channel will reach over 1,000,000 views.) Although the demographics of the channel have their limitations on how they can be analyzed, it is interesting (and astounding!) to see that over 90% of the world's countries include people who have viewed our choir's videos. Beside our own country, Singapore, Canada, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Philippines, Germany, Brazil, Netherlands, South Korea, and Australia comprise the next top ten countries that view the channel



Since the initial video was placed online, many contacts have been made throughout the world. Emails have been sent to CovenantCHOIRS requesting music, asking about the choral program at CCHS, looking for ideas, and simply discussing music pedagogy. Music has been sent to help different contacts in Indonesia, the Philippines, Great Britain, Germany, and Brazil who have expressed their love for God and desire to worship Him through music...often times to groups or individuals without the financial capacity to purchase even one copy of a piece of music. What a humbling reminder of God's blessings to have such great financial support for the things we hold so dear to us at Covenant.

Verbal help has been given to a struggling private school system on the east side of the state who strongly desires to have a music program like our own. A request was made from an individual in Virginia to have the choirs come down to work with them and present a concert for the people there. Continued communication also takes place with contacts in Indonesia and the Netherlands.

"The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God." — J. S. Bach



What a fruitful witness this is to God's people scattered abroad! Following are some comments made through the channel and emails sent to myself regarding God's work at CCHS:

"Amor sem fim, graça incrível... Linda música e bela apresentação. Louvado seja nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo!" (Translated from Portuguese: Endless love, amazing grace ... Beautiful music and beautiful presentation. Praised be our Lord Jesus Christ!")

"What an amazing performance! Would you mind telling me which arrangement this is? My choir wants to perform this lovely version if possible! Thanks!" (Hong Kong)

"It is inspiring to see the youth singing for the Lord."

"Magnificent! Wonderfully done! Praise the Lord for this choir and director! Where could I buy that arrangement? I would love to do it in my church in Honduras!"

"Hello! Good day! I have been really blessed by your songs. What is the name of your church? I'm from the Philippines and I just want to tell you that the work of the Lord is strong here. God bless your ministry!"

"Can't tell you how much your young people have blessed me with their music. Keep it coming my friend, God is using you in ways that you can't imagine." (Virginia, USA)

"I am an atheist but there is something about religious music like this that soothes my soul."

"From Brazil for these amazing Singers: ...humble at the spirit and superiors at the technique at same time...the intonation, harmony, and balance between the voices is superb. This is the best youth choir that I've ever heard in 30 years...I've been waiting for you during 30 years...Thanks for this high, brilliant and fantastic quality of singing!!!"

From the choral professor at Redeemer Christian College in Toronto, Canada: "Your choristers are a tremendously powerful family now!! Do not forget that. This is a gift from God. You will touch people in manners you will have no way of knowing. I wish we could inherit a few of these good folk at Redeemer. These kids are the type any choral ensemble wants. They're energetic, musically pliable, [and] have such a genuine appreciation for the "whole musical machine." [The music they make is] "just a tiny glimpse of what our God has in store for us." There is that one ingredient that allows all these things to come together - you all love the Lord, and feel as individuals, and a group, that this is one of the greatest gifts we may enjoy in His Kingdom. You are doing really fine things. It will become another powerful point in my daily work at Redeemer, to pray for you folks, think about you and be glad that we are working at this musical message together for the Lord. Fiat pax in Virtute Tua!!

What a joy and excitement this brings to our labors...to know God is strongly using His youth for a witness of His love. Lest we be filled with pride, we remember God uses us mere sinners for this greater purpose. Apart from His blessing, we are simply another choral group attempting to spread 'something' through music; however, with these avenues that the Lord uses, the music is not only able to help us (and a lengthy article should be written on how God continues to use our music to not only prick but also to soothe the very depths of these young people's souls) but will also serve those of God's catholic church, scattered abroad.

*"Because thy
lovingkindness is
better than life,
my lips shall
praise thee."
Psalm 63:3*

Welcome

NEW TEACHERS

is in the religion and history department, instructing our young people in Church History, Cults and Non-Christian Religions, and World History. When I'm not doing my utmost to hold the truth of God's word before the students, I'm typically holding a squeegee at the top of a ladder.

Our young family-of-five life is as busy as it is robust. Regarding the ratio of male to females in the Dykstra household, I happily find myself outnumbered; Jehovah has given my wife Megan and me three daughters. Blessedly, the staff at Heritage is assisting us in our parental covenant duty. Most notably, our family has officially moved out of the era of diapers, cribs, and build-a-bears and has entered into what I consider the era of piano lessons, colorful gel-pens, and putting to memory the various names of American Girl Dolls. It is because of especially the latter that I have more than once found great comfort in the words of Luther, who when still unmarried, wrote, "When a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other menial task for his children, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool...God with all his angels and creatures is smiling." And typically, we are smiling too.

Karl Dykstra

With CCHS being my third teaching post in our Christian schools, I am given the unique opportunity to (re!)teach many of my former students. The assignment that I'm filling here at CCHS



Ethan Mingerink

Hello, I'm Ethan Mingerink, the son of Don and Maureen Mingerink, members at Byron Center PRC. I'm married to Alyssa (Klamer), and we have two boys, Elijah and Daniel. We are members at Hudsonville PRC.

Growing up, I attended Heritage Christian School and, after that, Covenant Christian High School. After graduating from Covenant, I began my studies at Grand Valley State University, originally pursuing an education degree before switching majors and graduating with a B.A. in English (focused in language and literature studies) as well as a minor in Applied Linguistics. Once I had completed my studies at GVSU, I worked self-employed for several years in online sales, growing my business to 4 employees at its peak. However, in the fall of 2015, after much prayer and consideration, my wife and I decided that I should go back to school and finish the education degree that I had started previously as I had begun to feel a stronger and more compelling desire to be a teacher in our Christian schools. It was shortly after that decision and my return to school that the Spanish teaching job at Covenant became available.

By the providence of God, my background in linguistics and appreciation of language, as well as a willingness to further explore my foreign language studies, helped to make this teaching opportunity a possibility. My family and I have been greatly blessed so far within the teaching community at CCHS. When I had been a student at CCHS, I could sense the fellowship and unity of the teachers, and now, as a teacher, I can feel that same fellowship and common-cause within the faculty.

However, greater than that, I have enjoyed working with the Christian youth that we have in our schools. That has been a great joy for me. This fall, while I have been teaching at Covenant, I've also been finishing a few final requirements for my education degree from GVSU. I've had to spend some significant time working within the public schools, and that exposure has only heightened my love for our schools. To be a part of our schools, now in the capacity of teacher, has truly been an enjoyment and blessing. What a gift we have that our children can attend schools that echo and "back-up" the lessons and instruction they hear at church and from their parents! I look forward to the continued work and responsibilities that God has given to me to perform at CCHS this year.

Emily Boersen

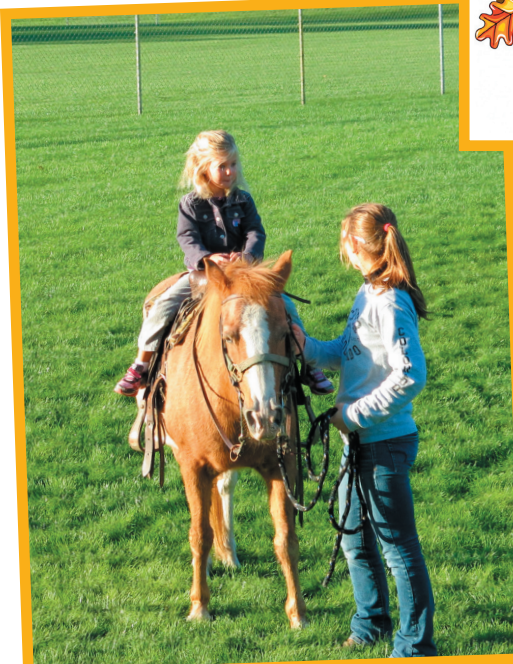
I have just completed my student teaching at Covenant under Ms. Jennifer Knott. Second semester I will be teaching part time as both an English and Math teacher as well as coaching freshmen girls basketball- GO CHARGERS!

As far as my background goes, my last name (and maiden name 'Sweet') both most Dutch bingo players :) I am originally from the east side of the state, and was raised Non-Denominational Christian. I graduated from Flint Powers Catholic High School, and came to the west side of the state to attend Aquinas College. Upon meeting my husband Ryan a few years later, we started attending the Protestant Reformed churches and gained knowledge about the reformed doctrine. We were both raised outside the church and knew very little about doctrine and biblical truth. Through the Lord's providence and work of the Holy Spirit, we both made confession of faith and joined First PRC of Holland in October 2015.



We feel extremely blessed to have received such a warm welcome into the PR community. My husband Ryan leads a sanding and finishing crew for Grand Hardwood Flooring in Holland. We were married this past June, and have since bought our first home in Wyoming, MI. Many lovely changes are happening in our lives right now.

FALL FESTIVAL



Teacher Profile - Mrs. Sue Looyenga

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

This is my ninth year as a teacher at CCHS, the longest time I have served as a teacher anywhere. Previously I have taught at Adams Christian School (Wyoming, MI) in the 6th grade, Heritage Christian High School (Dyer, IN), and at the South Holland (IL) Protestant Reformed Christian School in grades 6-9.

I am a “late-bloomer”, having begun my education as a teacher in my late thirties, graduated from Trinity Christian College in 1996 at 42, and obtained a master’s degree in education from Dordt College at 57 years of age. Before that, my time was spent being a stay-at-home mom of my six children as their very first teacher.



What is the most rewarding aspect about being a teacher?

I would have to say that being with children and young people and being privileged to bring the wonders of God’s creation and marvelous works through the ages before their eyes from day to day through the lens of His Word is the greatest blessing about teaching. Although it’s a little more difficult to stir a sense of wonder in teenagers than it is with younger children, it still does occur, and it is a thrill to see amazement in their eyes, and appreciation for the greatness of their Lord.

What is the most difficult thing about teaching?

Both teachers and students are sinners, and we spend enough time with one another each day to see sin’s effects in the classroom. A teacher’s lack of care or a student’s poor attitude can have a very negative effect upon the classroom environment. Also, at times teachers and students come to school with heavy burdens upon their hearts that affect our teaching and learning. With so many families represented at school, there are burdens of sorrow in the death of loved ones, or of a parent or sibling’s walk far from God and family in sin. Some students bear the affliction of illness and disease and pain, while others may suffer pain emotionally from deep hurts in their lives. The Devil walks around like a lion, seeking to devour vulnerable adults and children. Additionally, there are always students with special academic and physical needs who need patience and understanding in their struggles. Being a teacher is a demanding task, because these children are God’s children and we love them deeply, and we hurt with them when they hurt. At the same time, though, we have the comfort of knowing and being able to comfort them with the knowledge that we do have a Savior who is all-sufficient for our needs, and He is ever near to us. Prayer and access to God’s Word at all times are precious privileges we have in a Christian school.

What noteworthy experiences have shaped you as a teacher?

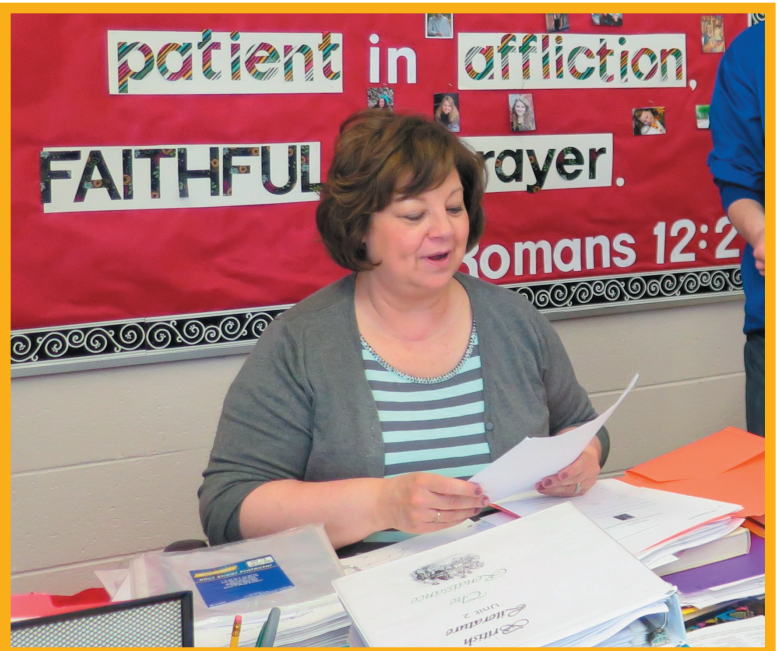
First of all, having had godly teachers with a passion for opening minds to the wonder of God having created all things, upholding them by His hand of Providence, and unfolding His plan of salvation for His people in time through Jesus Christ was a wonderful blessing to me as a child. I have had teachers I will never forget for showing me the delight of not only learning, but also getting wisdom and understanding through the lens of God’s Word. I am thankful for parents who provided this gift, by God’s grace, and have always supported our schools. I myself am a graduate of Hope PRCS and of CCHS Class of 1972.

Although I never expected to become a teacher, I greatly enjoyed being involved with my children’s teachers and schools first at Adams Christian in Grand Rapids, and



then, when our family moved to the Chicagoland area so that my husband could continue his education, at the South Holland PRCS. But God had another plan. Quite unexpectedly, I became a mother of six who experienced an unexpected and undesired divorce when my children were still young - ages 14 down to 16 months old. I will never forget the impact that godly teachers at both the South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School and Illiana Christian School had upon my children's lives, and their support and encouragement for me as well. As I began to think about the very real need to work to support myself, eventually I chose to return to school and become a teacher myself so that, if possible, I could be close to at least some of my children as I worked. God's provision for our family as I began my schooling - at first parttime, and then later full time - was amazing, and the further I advanced in the teacher education program at Trinity Christian College, the more I saw that it was God who was the One calling me to this and blessing my decision. When I graduated from Trinity 20 years ago in December, 1996, I served as a substitute teacher at Illiana Christian High School and at Calvin Christian School in South Holland, and also at the Protestant Reformed Christian School in South Holland, where I was hired to teach the following September. I had the privilege of teaching my future son-in-law at Calvin Christian and my youngest three children at SHPRCS. Eventually, three of those four became teachers themselves, and my three oldest children are currently teaching as well.

Last of all, because the State of Illinois required two student-teaching placements, at least one of which had to be in a public school, I spent seven weeks in a very large (2500 students) public school in one of the southern suburbs of Chicago. There, for the first time, I became acquainted with the utter hopelessness of teens who came from desperately difficult situations of poverty, neglect, abuse, crime, and broken homes, and who did not have or know the love of Jesus Christ. Being forbidden by law from bringing God's Word into the classroom, from offering prayers for them in their need, from speaking the name and bringing the comfort of Jesus Christ to them, I had only one recourse: to be as Christ Jesus to them in my words and actions daily, and to pray for them outside of school each night. They knew I had come from Trinity Christian College as a student teacher, and they were allowed to talk of their Christianity to me, and some who were believers themselves did in their journals. The fact that the Lord had His children there became evident. Some of them had grandparents



who were Christians and were raising them; many others had a single parent - usually a mother-who was caring for them; some came from great poverty, but they knew they belonged to God, and their hope was evident in the things they wrote and said to me privately. But there were many others who had no hope in Jesus Christ in their difficulties. One whole class I taught consisted of young men and women who had been in alternative schools or in prison the year before and were now being allowed to return on a probationary basis, depending upon their behavior in the classroom. My heart was deeply humbled and filled with gratitude to God for His provision for my broken family, for my children's ability to receive a Christian education and all that a day with Christ's presence in their classroom brought to them, but my heart was also filled with prayers that God would rescue those of His children who did not yet know Him, and did not have the blessing of Christian education.

What do you think is the greatest challenge facing students today?

There are a number of challenges that today's students are facing, not the least of them a godless society that falsely offers many opportunities for a fulfilled life if they are willing to loose themselves from the restraints of authority-whether God's, their parents', or their church's authority - and find true freedom in looking to their own desires. The idea of entitlement saturates the media and our culture, causing young people to believe that they deserve a good life, and our postmodern and post-Christian society offers a "Vanity Fair" of items for achieving it without God and His laws. God's people need to seek His strength to make our homes, schools, and churches places of refuge from this world's constant bombardment of our young people and children. We have hope that can never be taken away when our faith is in God and His promises, and they need to know that as never before. These are perilous times.

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
Travis Van Bommel



The fall season has come to its conclusion at Covenant, and by the time you are reading this article, we are probably a good ways into the basketball seasons, and some of the spring sports teams are in the weight room, getting ready for March. Seems like there is always something going on here – there really never is a “down time”. We take a moment to recap our fall sports.



The Cross Country teams completed another competitive season. 55 runners (27 boys and 28 girls) participated in Cross Country this year. The girls team captured third place in the MHSAA Regional to qualify to run in the State meet. At the State meet, the girls captured 11th place. On the boys side, Seth Bleyenberg qualified to run at the State meet, where he captured 46th.



The Soccer team captured its 5th consecutive MHSAA District Championship with a hard fought 1-0 victory over Calvin Christian. The team won its Regional Semi-final game in Cadillac, to advance to the Regional finals. The team fell in the Regional finals to Muskegon Catholic by a score of 2-1 – a double overtime, shoot out, sudden death shoot out progression.



The Volleyball team, under 1st year coach Courtney Peterson, captured the MHSAA District Championship, before bowing out in the Regionals. Thank you to all of our teams and fans for being great representatives of Covenant Christian High School. We encourage everyone to make use of the new Athletic Department Website: www.covenantchristianathletics.org. Get schedules, the latest scores, news, photos, videos, and updates. Sign up to receive notifications and updates for your favorite Covenant teams. We look forward to seeing everyone this winter.

