

# THE COURIER

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

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

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*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:  
praise him with the psaltery and harp.  
Psalm 150:3*





**REFLECTIONS ON THE YEARS AT COVENANT**

Each year, toward the end of August, we welcome our new 9th grade students to CCHS during our Freshman Orientation program. This is our first introduction to these vibrant young students who are all excited, yet nervous about beginning high school. This is always a wake-up call for us as teachers and leaders in our school. These are the students that we will be guiding, teaching, and mentoring over the next 4 years. Two months prior to this orientation, we gave diplomas to our graduating seniors. These are the same students that started in high school a mere 44 months before. The development and growth in maturity of these students during this time is astounding. At graduation we rightly focus on the accomplishments and development of the class as a whole. But each class is made up of individuals who have been led by God along a particular pathway that was meant to shape and mold them into the person that He wants them to be. We are thankful that we can be a means that God uses for this work.

The final “product” (the graduate) of the time and effort put forth at Covenant, is the result of many different forces, different influences, and different experiences that God has placed on that pathway. There is growth in many areas of their life. During the four years of high school they get physically bigger, mentally smarter, and more skilled in so many areas. Physically, there are always a few graduates that you would hardly recognize from their 8th grade picture. Academically, they are able to take increasingly difficult work as they go through the curriculum and grow in their knowledge of God’s Word and the world around them. They also develop in their social skills and in their ability to interact with and work together with others toward common goals.

The stated purpose of the work at Covenant which comes from our Mission Statement is to: 1. “... prepare students to fulfill their basic purpose and reason for living; namely, to glorify God...2. Teach that the Bible is infallible and the standard for the Christian life...3. Teach that prayer is the chief means of thankfulness...4. Teach and show that the Kingdom of God comes first by loving God above all and our neighbor as ourselves.” (Found in our CCHS Mission Statement)

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*Freshmen now Seniors!*



It is always difficult to thoroughly evaluate the work that we do in school to determine the extent to which we are fulfilling this mission. With some students it is immediately evident, but sometimes the evidence of success or failure may not be seen for several years after the students leave us. Teaching involves patience and we do not always see immediate results. Sometimes the Christian school teacher has to refer to the text in Ecclesiastes 11:1, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it in many days." We don't know how many "days" it will take before we can determine the results of our "casting bread". It is always our prayer, along with the prayers of the parents, that graduates will leave here dedicated to letting their light shine in this world of darkness.



One way that we can evaluate the work of the school is to ask the students themselves about their experience at Covenant. It is generally encouraging to hear what students have to say. Members of the Class of 2017 were asked by the yearbook staff to respond to the question: "How has your journey through CCHS impacted your spiritual life?" Listen to the reflections of these students who came in as young freshman four years ago and graduated this past spring.

*My years at Covenant have taught me lessons in patience, compassion, dedication, and selflessness. I have grown and matured as a child of the King, and experienced God's upholding grace through the joys and challenges. KD*

*The courses at Covenant have taught me to see and praise God in the light of every subject and area of life. Not only have the religion classes taught me about God, but all the classes teach aspects of God. BB*

*Throughout the past four years I have been challenged to connect every area of academics to a Reformed worldview. Over time this has changed how I view the world around me and see God's works in creation. All the classes at Covenant made me grow closer in my walk with God. NK*

*It has been a blessing to walk the hallways with friends, teachers, and faculty of like faith. The Christ centered classes have worked to grow my faith and Godly peers have helped me to stay on the straight and narrow. I am so thankful for how this school has prepared me. LK*

*My experience in Covenant taught me that a lot can change in only a few years and can be overwhelming at times, but God will remain the same. He will never leave or forsake us. HK*

*Covenant further revealed my dependency on God and the blessing of resting confidently in His good will. LO*

*Covenant Christian gave me the opportunity to grow in my faith. God's Word is incorporated into every class so that we are able to recognize His incredible hand in every aspect of our lives. KP*

*While at Covenant I've learned to value the things that are important, to find joy in the people around me, and to give thanks to God in all things. AV*

*I am confident that as I grew in my knowledge of many different subjects in high school, I have grown in my knowledge of the Lord and His works. God used this Christian education to strengthen my faith and spiritual life. TS*

*Throughout my time at Covenant I have grown closer to God and realized that the little things that seemed important really aren't important at all. The most important thing in life is to glorify God and grow closer to Him in everything that you do. KZ*

We are thankful for the work that God does in the hearts and minds of the students during their four years at Covenant. We are also thankful that we who labor in the schools can serve as a means, along with parents and the church, to assist in this development. It is always our prayer that as our graduates move on with their lives, these words continue to have meaning for them and guide their future. Please continue to remember our schools and all the work that goes on in our schools in your daily prayers.

**FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD**  
Doug Bleyenburg, Education Committee



As we begin the 50th year of classes here at Covenant Christian High School we are humbled and thankful to our Father in Heaven for the many blessings He has shown to us. We have been blessed with so many dedicated and faithful teachers who have taken up the calling to educate our children in the fear of His name. Our Administrators have worked endlessly and faithfully to guide our school in its daily operation. The staff and volunteers work very hard and often unseen to make Covenant High School run smoothly. Our coaches do a great job of representing our school in Athletics. The Board has been blessed with godly men to direct and oversee the education process. This year we see almost 400 students at Covenant with larger classes on the horizon. Through all these means we see God's sovereign hand guiding and caring for Covenant Christian High School. We pray for humility and wisdom as we continue the work of educating our children in the fear of His name.

As the first marking period comes to an end, Rick Noorman reports that the school year is off to a great start and that there is a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere in the entire school. We see the teachers and students working hard together. The freshmen are adjusting well to high school and getting to know each other. The upperclassmen are dealing well with their new academic classes.

This year we welcome Mary Mahtani as a new teacher. She is working full time with Paula Kuiper in the Academic Support program. She is fitting in very well and doing a great job. Mary also coached the freshmen volleyball team. We also welcome back Mindy Bergman to Covenant who is working in the Guidance and Counseling office. She is doing a good job using her experience to help the students see and plan their education path. We would like to thank Sydney Bomers (who is now a new mom) for her time in the Guidance and Counseling office. Sydney also contributed by playing in the band and leading cheers at basketball games. Our thanks also to Kim Kuiper who taught in our Math program but has now left to pursue motherhood. Thanks to both of these ladies for their enthusiasm and concern for our students.

We also have two teachers who finished their student teaching and taught part time at Covenant last year. We welcome Emily Boersen and Matt Elzinga to Covenant on a full-time basis. Emily will be teaching English, Geometry and Algebra.

Matt will be teaching Computer Apps, Algebra, FST and continuing his work with the Band.

Once again our teachers have been very busy enhancing their educational skills through CED Projects. Since this past May, we have 9 teachers who have completed projects to improve the curriculum and their instruction of our students. Tom Bergman in AP Statistics, Kyle Bruinooge in Algebra and Worldviews, Rick DeVries in Science and Geography, Eric Gritters in Finale software for Music, Dan Kuiper in Physical Science and Chemistry, Kristen Crossett in Spanish Vocabulary and Grammar, Gary Lanning in Biology Labs and curriculum, Joel Minderhoud in Physical Science, and Ethan Mingerink in Spanish. It is great to see so much involvement in the CED program and the desire to continually provide a wonderful educational experience for our children at Covenant Christian.

In closing, we once again have had the privilege of observing our teachers in the classroom. Every Board member would agree that it is an amazing thing to see. We are humbled and impressed by the many different talents and styles that our teachers have and use to teach our children from a distinctly Reformed perspective. Their dedication and enthusiasm in the classroom is conveyed to the students who are engaged in learning. Our teachers are jealous and possessive of the time they have with our children in their classroom and we need to support and encourage them as they assist us in educating our children in the fear of the Lord. We can be confident and thankful that our children are well prepared for life in His Kingdom. To God be the Glory, we thank Him for this gift and covet your prayers for Covenant Christian High School.



**FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD**  
Joel Holstege, Long Range Planning



**FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD**  
Mark Ophoff, Enrollment Committee



If anybody hasn't noticed yet, Covenant Christian continues to grow. She has grown in enrollment over the years and this is expected to continue with the forecast of students from the grade schools. Since enrollment is increasing, the building and the whole school complex needs to expand as well. Over twenty years ago, I walked through one hall of Covenant (exception gym hall). Now one can almost get away with using the excuse that they got lost when they are tardy. Many additions have been made in the past and more will be needed in the future. Admittedly one can become proud that our school's enrollment continues to grow while we see other Christian schools' student count stagnant or even decreasing. May we never look at our own hands but instead thank God for our generations that continue to send their children to be instructed here at Covenant.

The grade schools have expanded and continue to expand as well. Enrollment numbers are steadily increasing. Currently we have 382 students at Covenant. With the enrollment numbers from the feeder schools, it is estimated that in less than ten years we could be close to 500. That is greater than a 25% increase in those ten years. More classrooms will be needed along with various other needs such as athletic areas and parking.

The long range planning committee is made up of men who love the school and have a vision for her future needs. We continue to review what the future needs of Covenant might be so that these needs are met in advance. With that in mind, we have been exploring the surrounding area, inquiring about land, communicating with the city, reviewing master plans, and, yes, discussing the options for more classrooms. We realize that all of our efforts are futile without the blessing of our Heavenly Father. May He continue to be our Guide as we make decisions for our children and grandchildren in the years to come.

With grateful hearts to our God, we had the blessing and privilege of interviewing and welcoming our new families. We conducted these interviews on June 29, July 19, and August 19. We reviewed our Mission Statement, Basis of Belief, and Admission Policies with each family. We are happy to report 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.

Welcome to the following new families:

- George and Michelle Bodbyl (Olivia) Southwest PRC
  - Scott and Joyce Boverhof (Brandon) Southwest PRC
  - Jack and Karen Brands (Kirsten) Grandville PRC
  - Joel and Belinda Brummel (Noah) Faith PRC
  - Ken and Anita Cook (Cierra) Harbor Reformed Baptist
  - David and Amber Decker (Chloe) Faith PRC
  - Brad and Dorothy Duisternars (Caroline) Hope PRC
  - Paul and Melisa Engelsma (Joshua) Trinity PRC
  - Tomm and Rochelle Heyboer (Lucas) Providence PRC
  - Jason Jr. and Jill Holstege (Lydia) Hudsonville PRC
  - Mike and Nikki Holstege (Zoe) Trinity PRC
  - Trevor and Sara Kalsbeek (Brendan) Southwest PRC
  - Mitchell and Sarah Kamps (Erika) Grandville PRC
  - Daryl and Jodi Koole (Cody) Grace PRC
  - Karen Korhorn (Rachel) Georgetown PRC
  - Brent and Michelle Kuiper (Klayton) Providence PRC
  - Prof. Doug and Teresa Kuiper  
(Sarah, Ryan, and Jared) Trinity PRC
  - Eric and Elizabeth Lubbers (Dylan) Southwest PRC
  - Dr. David and Dr. Shona Murray (Amy & Joni) Free Reformed
  - David Jr. and Amy Ondersma (David) Georgetown PRC
  - Ed III and Amanda Ophoff (Caleb) Byron Center PRC
  - Dean and Chris Poppema (Bradley) Southwest PRC
  - Ryan and Kelli VanDerMeulen (Tyler) Hudsonville PRC
  - Tom and Heidi VanderWaal (Alexis) Trinity PRC
  - Dan and Kate VanUffelen (Jakob) Hope PRC
- We also anticipate the arrival of Jessica Lanning, daughter of Rev. Andy & Stephanie Lanning of Byron Center PRC



## Covenant Christian High School Profit & Loss Budget Performance July 2016 Through June 2017

Included in this issue of the Courier is the financial report for the last fiscal year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). This report shows the actual revenue and expenses for that fiscal year, the budget for that year, and the difference of actual compared to budget for each line item. We are thankful to report that we finished the fiscal year with a surplus of \$49,975, even though we had budgeted a deficit of \$32,800. We thank all of our supporters for the continued generous giving toward the Christian education of our young people. Above all we are thankful to our heavenly Father who continues to supply the means, and who continues to work in the hearts of many, the desire to support the covenant instruction that takes place here at CCHS.

One of the main responsibilities of the Finance Committee is to make sure tuition is paid in a timely manner. This is crucial to the operations of our school, as tuition is about 80% of our budgeted revenue, which is needed to meet all of our expenses and obligations. We are thankful for all the families who faithfully see to it that their tuition is paid on time.

As we quickly approach the end of the calendar year, your tuition should be at least 50% paid. If you are a family struggling to pay your tuition, we urge you to contact one of the Finance Committee members. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you and help you come up with a workable plan to get your tuition paid.

	<u>Jul '16 - Jun '17</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Tuition	2,112,643	2,072,350	40,293
Church Collections	72,798	60,000	12,798
Pledges & gifts	353,899	325,000	28,899
CCHS Foundation Receipts	27,000	25,000	2,000
Special Education Receipts	101,153	89,450	11,703
Miscellaneous Receipts	4,444	5,000	(556)
Interest Income	1,720	-	1,720
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>2,673,657</u>	<u>2,576,800</u>	<u>96,857</u>
<b>EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES</b>			
Teaching & Administration	1,365,371	1,361,000	4,371
Substitute Teachers	805	1,000	(195)
Teacher Assistants	35,370	29,000	6,370
Office Staff	43,752	41,000	2,752
Athletic Director & Coaches	48,290	49,500	(1,210)
Payroll Taxes	124,881	124,100	781
Teachers' Retirement expense	40,453	48,000	(7,547)
Special Education	141,837	123,500	18,337
Teaching aids & supplies	17,257	14,000	3,257
Technology operating expense	16,000	16,000	-
Technology fund	24,000	24,000	-
Physical education equipment	374	1,000	(626)
Library	4,100	4,100	-
Science lab supplies	6,047	6,000	47
Teachers' development	13,000	13,000	-
Music	3,997	3,500	497
Band instruments	3,500	3,500	-
	<u>1,889,034</u>	<u>1,862,200</u>	<u>26,834</u>
<b>INSURANCE EXPENSES</b>			
Group insurance coverage	240,000	240,000	-
Workers' compensation insurance	6,000	5,800	200
General insurance	15,349	16,000	(651)
	<u>261,349</u>	<u>261,800</u>	<u>(451)</u>

Another significant responsibility of the Finance Committee is to conduct the annual support drive. For the current 2017-18 school year, we have budgeted \$350,000 for this support drive. This drive is well under way, and we will keep you updated with regard to this drive via bulletin announcements and letters. Please continue to prayerfully consider this need, as this goal must be met in order to meet all of our financial obligations.

<b>BUILDING EXPENSES</b>			
Custodial services	57,469	57,500	(31)
Maintenance Wages	20,000	20,000	-
Payroll taxes - custodial	4,238	4,400	(162)
Utilities	58,400	63,000	(4,600)
Water improvements assessment	4,120	4,300	(180)
Janitorial supplies	8,382	8,000	382
Snow removal	5,190	5,000	190
Trash removal	1,722	1,000	722
Grounds maintenance	17,000	17,000	-
General maintenance	40,000	40,000	-
Major maintenance program	54,000	54,000	-
Building furnishings	3,897	5,000	(1,103)
	<u>274,418</u>	<u>279,200</u>	<u>(4,782)</u>
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>			
Telephone	5,885	6,000	(115)
Copier replacement	1,500	1,500	-
Equipment repair & replacement	892	3,000	(2,108)
Transportation expenses	3,133	4,000	(867)
Office supplies	5,490	6,500	(1,010)
Equipment service contracts	10,065	9,000	1,065
Publicity & printing cost	1,928	3,500	(1,572)
Postage	2,083	4,500	(2,417)
Federation dues	3,079	2,300	779
Graduation expenses	2,315	3,500	(1,185)
Accounting fees	9,000	9,000	-
Miscellaneous expenses	4,511	4,600	(89)
Property Acquisition	44,000	44,000	-
Debt obligations - facilities	105,000	105,000	-
	<u>198,881</u>	<u>206,400</u>	<u>(7,519)</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>2,623,682</u>	<u>2,609,600</u>	<u>14,082</u>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<u><u>49,975</u></u>	<u><u>(32,800)</u></u>	<u><u>82,775</u></u>

Along with the annual support drive, we are also finishing up the special fund drive for the five classroom addition. Our original goal for this drive was \$800,000, which would allow us to complete this project without incurring any additional debt. As the project comes to completion, so does the drive. We will receive contributions for this project through the early part of 2018, so please consider a contribution to help us reach our goal. Updates for this drive will also be coming by way of bulletin announcements and letters.

The Finance Committee, along with the Board, covets your continued prayers for us, for our staff, and for our students. We give thanks to God for His covenant faithfulness to us, and pray that He continues to add His richest blessing on our efforts here, as we strive to educate our children in the fear of the Lord.



*“And David the king came and sat before the Lord and said, “Who am I O Lord God and what is mine house that thou hast brought me hitherto?”  
I Chronicles 17:16*

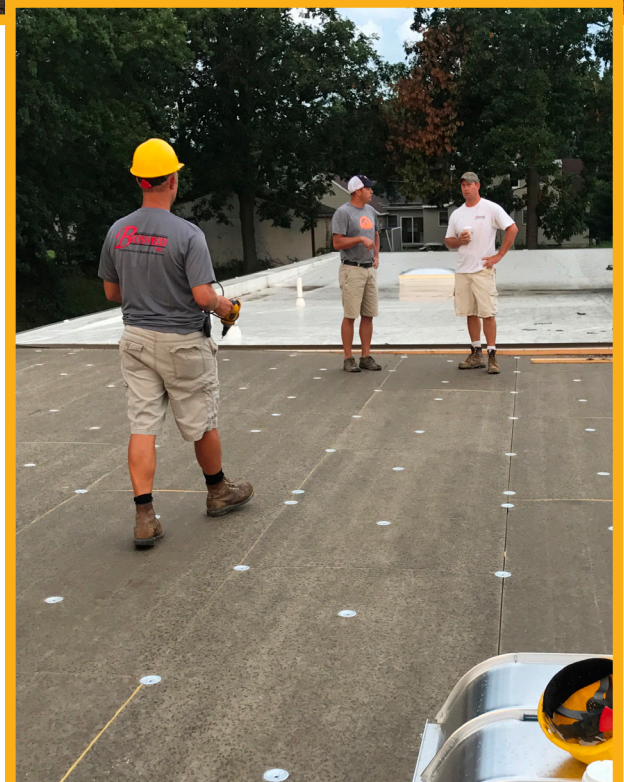
This was part of a beautiful prayer David brought before the Lord when requesting to build the temple. As David saw it was absolutely necessary that the ark have a permanent place in a temple instead of a tent, so our fathers saw it was absolutely necessary that we have our own Christian High School.

We can relate to this prayer as we look back over 50 years of covenant education here at CCHS and see how the Lord has provided for that need. Our school continues to grow, requiring us to constantly be adding rooms and space. The paint is hardly dry on our latest addition and already there is talk of needing additional classroom space in 5 years. How we marvel at the goodness of the Lord!

Looking back over those 50 years and the additions that were added to the original structure:

- 1971 – 2 classrooms, locker rooms, and storage
- 1978 – gymnasium
- 1987 – computer lab, Science room, 1 classroom, bathrooms
- 1994 – 6 classrooms and Music room
- 2008 – library expansion, second computer lab, networked computer system
- 2012 – 9th grade addition

Now add 2017 – 5 classroom addition





So we press on. As stated previously we are just finishing up the new 5 classroom addition for use in the second semester. It looks like we will come in under budget and on time! In addition to the new classrooms we also completely revamped the old academic support room for our special needs students, making it more accessible for them, including a handicap bathroom that is directly off the classroom. The academic support students will be taking up residence in one of the new classrooms.

The Board would like to extend a THANK YOU! to the General Manager of this project, Mark Koole, for keeping this project on time and on budget. Also to the contractors and suppliers who donated a LOT of time and materials to this project, as well as the outpouring of gifts from our constituents. Such gifts are not limited to special drives but often times are received through estate donations or cash to be used for very specific purposes. Most of these gifts never become public but are nevertheless vital to the affordability of the good Christian education that our children receive.

I personally have been privileged to be on the School Board during the last three building additions at CCHS and the generosity of our people never ceases to amaze me. It would do everyone good to serve at least one term as a School Board member just to experience that part of it alone.

Thanks be to God!





Technology like any creation of our Father is a creature that we are called to subdue and use to the honor and glory of our Father and for the good of our neighbor. “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it”, Gen 1:28. This is an especially difficult task with regards to technology given the many sinful pitfalls that we must all avoid when using technology. It can be used to sin directly; it can be used excessively to pull us away from God-glorifying work.

Technology can also be used for great good. It can be used to create great works that glorify our Father. It can be used to communicate quickly and easily with saints across the world that we would otherwise not be able to speak with directly. It can help us organize and simplify work to free our time to accomplish other meaningful tasks.

The Technology Committee oversees the technology needs of our school both to safeguard our children from the sinful pitfalls that technology can present and to provide the means to use this creature to the glory of God.

One of the ways that the Technology Committee implements safeguards is through GoGuardian. This software program allows us to track all usage of all activity on the Chromebooks and has special guidelines on items to flag and block.

Over the summer, the Technology Committee was hard at work. 75 new Chromebooks were enrolled and organized into 4 new carts. This brings our total of Chromebooks to 175 or just under a 2:1 ratio of student to Chromebook. The Chromebooks are always in high demand for instruction. Two Virtual Reality equipment sets were also purchased, which will provide the teachers an innovative new teaching technique for our students. They have already been used in World Geography and Government. The Wi-Fi switches and access points were updated to new switches which has improved the Wi-Fi coverage and capability of our wireless network.

With the new addition well under way and nearing completion, the Technology Committee was closely involved with the design work and plans for the technology needs and network extension into this new space. The committee will be working closely with the construction company, Kleyn Electric, KVO, and ITS to purchase and install all new technology in the new addition.



The Board also approved the hiring of Information Technology Systems (ITS) for ongoing managed service of our network. They will provide us with anti-virus, remote support, system monitoring, and help desk among other services. Mitchell Haan has ably provided this work for years but due to increased demands on his own professional career, he can no longer continue in this capacity. The Technology Committee and School Board would like to offer our sincere thanks to Mitchell for his help with our technology needs over the years.

The Technology Committee also thanks Ria Faber, Matt Elzinga, and Rick DeVries for their invaluable help with the current technology needs of the school.

We give thanks to our God for His providential care in providing for our students the means to use technology for their education and for the glory of His Name.





Recently Covenant invited the organization, Protect Young Eyes, to come and speak to students about the Internet and how to navigate it. Later that evening the speaker spoke to parents and explained the risks associated with unprotected use of the Internet by our children. He showed them programs to put in place for parental control of the different apps and games used by kids today. The most important tool he recommended is good communication and intentional conversation to prevent harmful exposures.

If you would like to listen to this valuable talk, a link can be found on the top left of Covenant's home page. We have been given permission to post this link until Jan. 1, 2018.

**COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION**

A quick note from the Foundation Publicity Committee. As CCHS enters her 50th year of Christian education, may we all say to our Lord, Great is Thy Faithfulness! Covenant Christian High School has enjoyed strong and faithful supporters of her over these five decades.

A pleasant reminder, we are asking for help to support our CCHS Foundation with a year-end gift. The cash gifts and yearly fundraisers provide needed cash for gifts to the school's operating budget. Also, we encourage you to consider adding the CCHS Foundation to your estate plan.. You do not need to be wealthy to help in this way. Your estate gift helps in two ways: growth to the main fund and encouragement to all supporters of CCHS as they see others remember her in their own passing. Your contribution, small or large, is the gift that keeps on giving. Do you need help setting up a will or estate plan? Call one of the Board members listed below or contact Kurt Knoll at the Barnabas Foundation (616.956.1232) who will assist you in achieving a very important long term planning goal. Please look for our postcard in the mail regarding a year end gift.

The Foundation Committee:  
Randy Dykstra, (President), Dewey Engelsma (Secretary), Dave Bouwkamp (Vice-All), Don Offringa (Treasurer), Tim Pipe Jr., Rick Wieringa, Bernie Kamps

**Bob Noorman inducted into Hall of Fame**

The Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan (BCAM) has inducted Bob Noorman into their Hall of Honor as a "Friend of Basketball." The BCAM Hall of Honor was established to honor those persons who have helped to improve basketball in Michigan. These honorees have been longtime supporters of their local teams or have given outstanding service to the game of basketball. To be eligible for the Hall of Honor, a person must have been involved with basketball for at least 20 years. That person must be nominated by a BCAM member. Bob was nominated by a local coach for his 45 years of service to the Covenant Christian athletic program. We are thankful for Bob's work, and Dorothy's support, for over 40 years as the "Voice of the Chargers" at many events, working with the Athletic Boosters, and overall support of the program.





# BAND TRIP

Last month, the Covenant Christian High School band traveled to Dyer, Indiana to perform a combined concert with the band of Heritage Christian High School. It was a great opportunity for the band to work with the students from Indiana, and both schools enjoyed their time together.



After arriving at our hotel Thursday night, we met the Indiana students at SkyZone in Schererville. The students spent a few hours climbing walls, dunking basketballs, and playing dodgeball and volleyball on giant trampolines. The next day we stopped at the Albanese Candy Factory and bowled a few games in Merrillville. We arrived at Heritage Christian High School on Friday afternoon. We held a brief rehearsal with the Heritage band and got to know their director, Mr. David Baldwin. Mr. Baldwin is a CCHS graduate and a former student of Mr. Kamper. After rehearsal, the students played some games together until supper.

That night, the bands performed a concert together in the school gym. Each band played a few of their favorite pieces followed by several combined numbers. The concert was well-attended, and both bands played well. The students said some quick goodbyes before boarding the bus to return home.

We would like to thank Heritage Christian High School for their hospitality on this trip! It was a brief trip but a great chance for the two schools to collaborate and make some beautiful, God-glorifying music together. The students were well-behaved and enthusiastic and are already looking forward to next year's trip to Dordt College in Iowa! We hope you will join us. Matt Elzinga





# school life





**Mindy Bergman**

Back in 1998, I moved from Hull, Iowa to Grand Rapids, Michigan to teach English at Covenant. I taught for three years, married the math teacher, taught one more year, and then began full-time parenting, which I have been doing ever since. Our five children have gotten ridiculously old, and are now at Heritage Christian. When our youngest went to first grade this fall, I started working three days a week in the Guidance Office at Covenant, across the hall from my old classroom.

In the Guidance Office, I meet with students, talk to colleges that want to visit Covenant, send out transcripts for those who are applying to colleges, and generally try to be helpful to your students who are thinking about and planning for their futures.

When Tom and I are not at Covenant, we provide taxi services for our children, try to stay on top of the upkeep at home, enjoy the preaching of the word and the fellowship of our church family at Providence PRC, spend time with our kids, and read books.



**Stephanie Adams**

Before my first experience at Covenant going through high school, life started for me in Lynden, Washington. I was born into a family with 2 older sisters, and we were part of the Lynden PRC until moving to Michigan in 1997. Here in Grand Rapids, I live on the NE side of the city and am a member of First PRC. One of my joys in life is being involved with my family; I have 8 living nieces and nephews. Some other things I enjoy are music, reading, biking, and traveling.

After high school, I attended Baker College in Muskegon to become an Occupational Therapy Assistant. This field involves helping people of any age achieve more independence with daily activities; I worked with adults and seniors in physical rehabilitation and in the homecare setting. I am finding that my background in Occupational Therapy is very applicable in my current position being involved in the Special Education program as a para-professional.

Back at high school now, I continue to learn as well as assist with instruction and in developing life skills. It is good being part of this body of Covenant, and I look forward to continued growth together!

# Welcome

## New and Returning Teachers



**Mary Mahtani**

I was born in Katy, Texas, where I joined my six older brothers as part of the Mahtani family. After my sister was born, and we moved around every few years, we ended up in Grandville, Michigan, where I attended Heritage Christian School before going on to Covenant Christian, from which I graduated in 2014. My siblings are spread out across the United States, but my parents and I attend First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland.

After graduating from high school, I was sure I wanted to be a high school teacher, probably in the area of English (or so I thought). I attended Grand Valley State University for a year, but as it turned out, I couldn't find just one subject I loved enough to really pursue, even though I loved the thought of teaching high school students. After a summer of working with younger children, I went to Grand Rapids Community College, where I received my Associate's degree in Child Development. In the middle of my second to last semester there, I saw that Covenant was looking for a teacher in the Academic Support program. I wasn't too familiar with it, but after applying and interviewing, it seemed to me as if this was the job that I had always wanted, but never knew much about. It was a door and opportunity that only God in His timing could have planned for me. After being here for a few months, I am so grateful that this is where I'm called to be at this time. I love being able to help students with a variety of subjects, and I enjoy getting to know them and seeing God's light in them as they work. I'm very thankful for this opportunity and the work I've been given. I am very grateful to the students and faculty that have welcomed me to Covenant Christian High.

I work full-time in Academic Support, and I also had the privilege to coach the Freshman volleyball team this fall--it was a blast! I'm looking forward to getting married next summer, Lord willing, and am excited to see what God brings in the next few years.

## Teacher Profile

### Mr. Jon VanOverloop



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

I was born and raised right here in Michigan. I attended Hope School and then moved on to CCHS. At the beginning of my 4th grade year at Hope, a new school called Heritage started, It seems that most of the girls left to attend Heritage because we had about 16 boys and 4 girls in our class for the remaining years at Hope. After CCHS I went to Dordt College for a business degree. During those years I became interested in teaching and always enjoyed the sciences. I switched my major and graduated from Dordt with my bachelors in 1998. Later at CCHS I pursued my master's degree from MSU while teaching.

CCHS hired me right out of college. Although my major was in the sciences, I was asked to teach Keyboarding, Law, Economics, Psychology, and Biology. That first year I was learning the subject matter just ahead of the students in those other classes. As the school grew and years went by, I've settled into teaching Law, Psychology, Biology, and Physical Science.

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

The most rewarding aspect of teaching is giving students insights about the subjects I teach so that they can know and enjoy their God. I think the theme of my Psychology class could be expressed as glorifying and serving God. I completely enjoy leading students to understand man's soul and how it relates to the body and to God. Biology and Physical Science are also explorations of the works of God.

The hardest thing about being a teacher is applying student discipline. It's not what I wake up in the morning looking to do and it's only a disruption from my real goals. Discipline is necessary to achieve my goal but I wish we could just move along through the academic year without it.

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

That's a tough question but the answer I'll give today is Psychology. In Psychology I get to lead students through an exploration of their person. A human being is heart, soul, mind and body all packaged as one.

We explore how our body affects our mind and how our mind affects our body. A question I ask students early on is "Does the character of your soul affect your ability to hit a baseball?" In Psychology we get to think about questions like that as well as understand personality types, relationships, and intelligence. We view all of these topics through the lens of scripture and are constantly asking how to live for the King and with the Church given these new insights.

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

The greatest challenge students face today is living for the King. This is no different from the past. We all naturally live for self and it takes the grace of God to change that. Students have so many things that distract them from real life (Kingdom life). Just like in the past, many are distracted by fame, money, reputation, relationships, and status. A nuance for today's distractions is the challenges of maintaining online content. In the past students did not have to spend hours on creating polished quality content for their digital bulletin boards that entertain their digital friends. I have a feeling that today's students want people to "follow" them rather than encourage friends to follow Christ. The effort of making this digital content is successful because their friends do spend hours checking out the digital content that others have produced. I fear that we put too much attention on producing all that content for our online stories and we miss out on real life. What if we could just enjoy life for God's sake? We just might be a more connected community if we disconnect a bit.

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

In my free time I like to read but also spend time with my wife and kids. My reading list of books and magazines that I "need to read" keeps growing at a much faster rate than my personal reading speed. My life is not dominated by teaching and reading. In a mild way you could say that my family and I try to live the Gander Mountain slogan... "hunt, fish, camp." We try to get out on bike rides, go on hikes, and go hunting, but we also try to make it to the boys' soccer and basketball games. I owned a little John boat that we've hauled all over Michigan trying to find sunfish, perch, and bass. I just sold that boat and hope to find something a little bigger that accommodates our family of 8. We also enjoy CCHS basketball and will get to a number of games each year.



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 season, and some of the spring sports teams are in the weight room, getting ready for March.

We take a moment to recap our fall sports. I should note that as our school continues to grow, more and more of our teams are moving up to a higher division. This was the third year for Cross Country to be “moved up”, and this was the first year for the Boys Soccer team in a higher division. Seventy eight runners participated on the Cross Country teams in 2017, which was another competitive season. The girl’s team captured third place in the MHSAA Regional, which qualified them to run in the State meet. This was a very young girls’ team in 2017, and Coach Kalsbeek is hopeful that the experience of the State meet will help them in the future.

Under the guidance of Coach Courtney Peterson, the Volleyball team captured its second consecutive MHSAA District Championship. The girls advanced to the Regional Finals before bowing out to Lainsburg, who advanced to the State Finals.

The Soccer teams streak of MHSAA District Championships was broken in 2017. The Chargers fell to Unity Christian in the district final game. Covenant tied the game with 3:00 remaining. After 2 overtimes, the team was defeated in a shoot-out. It was another great season for Mike Noorman and his squad.



More and more of our teams will be moving into a higher MHSAA classification over the next few years. Our school is reaching the enrollment limits for Division 4, and also for Class C. It’s an exciting time for Athletics!! I encourage everyone to come to a few basketball games this winter. We believe that these events are great place to bring your children, with an outstanding family atmosphere.

Schedules are available on the Athletic Department website.



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](http://www.covenantchristianathletics.org) Get schedules, the latest scores, news, photos, videos, and information on coming events. We look forward to seeing you and your family this winter.

