

THE COURIER

*WINTER
2020*

Published by the Board of
COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

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Expanding Church History

A new distinctive feature of Covenant's already strong curriculum will be a restructured Religion program.

The department will be implementing a transition of courses beginning with early church history and moving towards a better understanding of the different Christian groups today and the variety of competing worldviews.

(Article found on page 12 and following)



FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Rick Noorman



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interesting article that I had stashed in my "reading pile." It contained the word "goal" and seemed to take an interesting approach. The article was titled "The Goal of Education is Becoming." It was written by Marc Prensky, an author of books on education (secular education not Christian) and also the founder of the Global Future Education Foundation and Institute which is devoted to creating education for the 21st century and beyond. After investigating their website, I found that I could not agree with everything that they advocate for but I do appreciate how they look at the goal of education. That goal is essentially to help the student become a more capable person or better person than when they started. Applied to Christian education, it could be stated as helping one to become more capable of fulfilling his God given tasks in the home, church, and community and better fit to serve God in whatever station of life God places him or her. This seems to me to be what should describe the work of the Christian school. This could be stated aptly by quoting what would describe a mature man of God. I Timothy 3:17, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." By God's grace this is what we are all striving for in our life of sanctification. This can also be incorporated in the goal of parents as they work to fulfill the vow taken at baptism and the school as they assist the parents to that end. (I encourage you to read the last chapter of Reformed Education by Prof. David Engelsma for a thorough look at the goals of Reformed education. This chapter is worth reading on an annual basis.)

Prensky would define the educational process as "becoming." All of the course offerings in a Christian school are important because they all work to mold and shape the Christian young person into someone who is better fit to serve the Lord than they were when they started school. The whole process helps them to become something that they were not before. One could describe all of a child's schooling in these terms. In third grade the school works to help the students become fourth graders and then fifth graders and so on. I may be slightly biased on this, but I believe that the high school years are an incredibly fertile time to bring about growth and development. This can be attributed to several factors that are present during this short period of one's life.

First, the early years of schooling build up a level of knowledge and skills that can be used as a foundation to further growth in many areas. Prensky, in his article, tends to diminish the value of "knowing stuff." He says that rather than asking our kids, "What did you learn in

BECOMING

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation were insistent on having schools established that would teach the youth. They were concerned about having educated church leaders, ministers and teachers. But they believed that these schools must go beyond just preparing for work in the church. They were also concerned about preparing educated men and women to be able to appreciate and enjoy the gifts that God gave them in all of their life. This included the ability to labor for the kingdom and to appreciate the wonders of creation. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli and other reformers, who established schools, emphasized a broad education that would teach the whole child. The educational goals of Covenant Christian High School follow this same philosophy. Our work as a school involves the development of the whole child. We have this goal for each student as they enter our doors for the first time. It is our intention that each child, over their four years at Covenant, will become something that they were not before they started.

As I was considering these goals, I came across an

school today?" we should ask, "What did you become that you were not before?" I would agree that we need to develop in the child the abilities to grow in their understanding of the world that they are called to live in and to be able to apply what they have learned to solve problems, construct arguments, relate to other people, and think creatively. However, I would contend that knowledge is essential to help a child to become the person that we would want them to be and necessary to do the things that we want them to do. There has to be a good balance between teaching for knowledge, for understanding, and for application.

Second, the natural direction of the life of a young teen will put them on a course to experience and become more aware of the world in which they are called to live. Simply having a driver's license opens up a whole new world for them. Add to that their jobs, their extracurricular activities, and their social activities, all of which lead them from a sheltered environment to one that is much more open to interaction with the world that will, from this point on, always be a part of their life. This creates wonderful opportunities to discuss the role of the Christian in this life and to discern the viability of taking part in various activities. This is an incredibly challenging time in the life of the young saint. These times are not always the most comfortable for parents, but they are fertile ground for planting seeds for later harvest. In his wonderful book, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, Paul David Tripp has a chapter he calls "Life in the Real World." In that chapter he talks about helping a teenager develop a cultural awareness. He concludes the chapter this way. "We hope we can hold onto our goal of raising teenagers who can think biblically, understand their culture, and deal with anything it produces from a biblical perspective. Their teenagers will become (emphasis added) adults who know when to separate and when to participate. They will know when to tear down and how to rebuild. They will be people of influence. They will be salt and light." (p. 166)

Third, the school and the home have opportunity during these years to shape the attitude and the approach of the young person toward work. We do not want to make school easy, and let the students take the easy way through it. Life is not always easy. Perseverance is a good thing to learn. School should be rigorous. Rigor in school does not mean more homework, harder classes, and tougher grading. Rigor is marked by higher expectations with the necessary support, direction, and encouragement to help students meet those expectations.

Students need to be led to think through difficult situations and to work hard to come up with solutions that have to be tested. They may have to have some solutions fail so that they can learn from that and try the next possible solution. Without perseverance, tough problems may go unsolved because students are not

always willing to put in sufficient time and effort to work through it. Some students are put off if the teacher does not provide them with the answer if they say that they "don't get it." The most popular question in the room before a test is, "What is going to be on the test?" Perhaps a better question would be, "What do I have to do to prepare for this test?"

The goal of all of our classes should be to have each student develop a foundation of knowledge as well as the skills necessary to understand the material and to then apply it to the questions or problems that are presented. Students who take the Advance Placement courses at CCHS find out that this is not the case. These students work through a wide variety of material and even look at what past tests have offered but when exam day arrives they are likely going to have to apply what they have learned to entirely new situations.

All of this points us to the end goal of having our students become something different than they were when they started. I'll conclude with a couple of quotes. One looks at evaluating the work of the school from a secular perspective and the other from a spiritual perspective. Both are worth our consideration.

Prensky states,

"Although becoming may be harder to quantify than some of the things we measure today, we do not have a hard time recognizing it. Suppose teachers had to sit down a few times a year and write about what they think of each of their students is becoming? It would be far more useful and interesting to a parent (or potential employer) to know how good a student is at thinking, doing, relating, and accomplishing. We should care more about that student's passion than we do about his or her grades in math, language arts, social studies, and science."

Prof. Engelsma concludes his book this way.

"This (the goal of the glory of God) is accomplished in Christian education by parents and teachers. The children are reared to maturity. God uses, really uses, our education to bring His covenant child to become the man of God, fitted to a life of good works. There is power in education. Christian education is most significant; it is a demand of the covenant. What zeal, what carefulness, what faithfulness does this not call for? But it is God's work. Here Christian teachers and Christian parents rest. The covenant is God's. The covenant and the covenant promise are gracious. They depend upon no man. God makes covenant children. God brings them to spiritual manhood. God works in them to will and to do the life and labor of the kingdom." (p. 93)

May God continue to bless our work at Covenant Christian High School.

**BOARD PRESIDENT
TIM PIPE**



Christ-centered. What does this mean to you? I have heard this term used in describing our schools for as long as I have been an association member and a School Board member. To be Christ-centered, is to view Christ as the goal or focus upon which all our activities and processes are aimed. Recently, our Curriculum Director, heads of departments, and the Curriculum Committee have been working to develop reformed, Christ-centered themes around which each subject will be taught. Being Christ-centered has been, is, and will continue to be a primary goal of our high school. This speaks to our work as a body in the school, to be Christ-centered. But, there is much more to this concept of being Christ centered within our high school.

Since this is the theme of this Courier, I posed this question to my daughter and a few of her friends. Nothing better to do on Christmas break than a little homework from the School Board President was my thought. Following are their revealing and thought provoking responses.

“When we are taking a test, teaching a lesson, scoring a goal, cheering on the team, talking after school everything, EVERYTHING, is meant to bring glory to God.”

“To be a Christ-centered school is to have everything related to it revolving around our love for Him.”

“Christ is reflected in the students, teachers, and staff as well. Christ is shown in the work of students.”

As students, teachers, staff, school board members, etc..., when Christ is our center, we reflect Him; we show Him to those around us; we love Him; we glorify Him. Not just in those clearly spiritual activities like reading His word or singing His praises, but in everything we do. In every activity of our lives, when Christ is our center, our goal, our aim, we glorify Him. We reflect Him to those around us. We love Him whether in the stands, after school in the parking lot, or while taking a test. When Christ is our center, whether we teach $2x+y=5$ or the history of Augustine, Christ is glorified and His body (our children) is edified. When we walk in the

classroom, with Christ as our center, whether it is our favorite subject or our toughest teacher, Christ is glorified and His body (our teachers) is edified. When we talk with our friends about those who are the children of Christ (including those not in our midst) and Christ is our center, then Christ is glorified and His body (our fellow classmates) is edified.

Keeping Christ as our center is not easy; in fact, it is impossible of our selves to have Christ as our center. The temptations of this world draw our focus from Christ; Satan attacks us to take our aim from Christ; and our old man is always there to focus our energies on our own selfish goals. But, when Christ is our center, we have the peace that passeth all understanding. The troubles and worries of this life fade away. We don't worry about fitting in, about our playing time, about the get together we didn't get asked to, about the break up. Because it's not about us; it's about Christ. All of it. Every aspect of our life is for Christ and His glory when He is our center.

May God grant us the grace to have Christ as our center in this year to come.



Back Row: Michael Rau, Marvin Gritters, Brad Bruinsma, Joel Dykstra, Jonathon Kamps

Front Row: Rick Elzinga, Tim Pipe, Brad Dykstra, Dr. Brian Decker

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
DR. BRIAN DECKER



Every month the Education Committee meets, and there are routine and recurring items on the agenda: the administrator's report which deals with classroom visits, student issues, and discipline issues; teachers request to work on continuing education projects or take classes towards a masters degree; coach evaluations are reviewed; teacher schedules are approved; soon we'll be talking about hiring teachers and offering contracts; and, there are many other things that come to the committee. One thing that is new this year is a report from the Curriculum Director. Last year, the Board approved hiring for a new position at the school. That new job was a Curriculum Director, and Kyle Bruinooge now spends half of his time in this role.

Why do we need a Curriculum Director? It is because the CCHS of 2019 is not the CCHS of 20 or 30 years ago. Gone are the days of having one teacher for each subject. Whereas we used to have a couple of sections of a class taught by the same teacher, with current class sizes of around 100 (and soon to be more than that — the current K-3 classes average 136 students each!), there are some classes with 4-5 sections being taught by multiple teachers. Continuity is vitally important as the students move through high school, and Kyle will help make sure that happens.

So, what else does the CCHS Curriculum Director do? Quite simply, his job is to determine what we

are teaching, and then to help make improvements. There could be many aspects to this, and it includes updating the Curriculum Guide, helping teachers find new textbooks, developing new curriculum, and reviewing standardized test results (PSAT, SAT, etc) and determining if there are gaps in our curriculum that need to be addressed.

At a recent meeting, Kyle reported on what struck me as being very important work. He has asked each department (math, science, history, etc) to develop faith based instructional goals for their department/ classes. We assume when we send our children to a Christian school that they are going to be taught each subject in light of the Bible. We spend thousands of dollars per child per year so they can experience this. To expect that the sections of 9th grade history or 11th grade American literature will have continuity between them is very reasonable. More importantly, to have confidence that the department will base that continuity on Biblical principles and goals is very encouraging to the Education Committee, and I'm sure to the readers of this as well.

Kyle's work is going well, and we are thankful for that. He reports that the teachers have been receptive to his information and his ideas, and we hope this continues. If you have any questions about this, feel free to ask anyone on the education committee or Kyle himself. We would be happy to talk to you about this.



**ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE
BRAD BRUINSMA**



Every summer as our high school prepares to begin another school year, the Enrollment Committee at Covenant Christian High School has the responsibility of interviewing new families seeking to enroll their child here at CCHS. Recently, I was asked why we go through all the work of contacting the parents seeking enrollment, setting up a special meeting night (or what is increasingly becoming the trend - a couple of nights), speaking with them, and holding individual interviews with each family. Especially since most of these families already have gone through our feeder schools. While it does take up some time, this interview process is both a necessity and a privilege that your School Board does not take lightly.

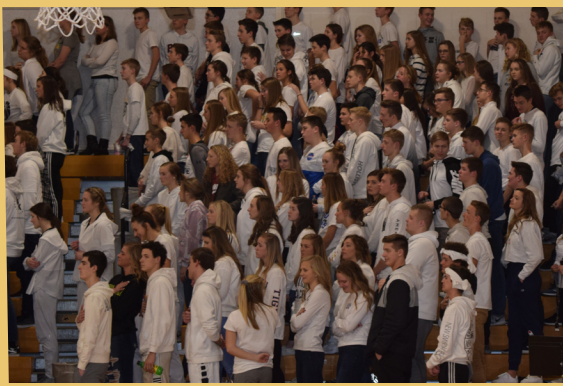
First of all, it is a necessity! It is important that the School Board maintain this seemingly mundane task. Sadly, in the society in which we live we see the erosion of morality and biblical principles taking place all around us. It is important that we protect the precious heritage established so many years ago by past generations. A distinct heritage, founded on biblical principles and spelled out in our basis of belief and admission policy. By continuing to be consistent in our enrollment practice, we are able to use discretion to discern who meets the criteria for enrollment at this christian school.

But it is also a privilege! The Lord promises us in Genesis 17:7, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations." As a committee, it is a wonderful blessing to witness that truth carried out through believing parents. We are able to hear from these parents their deep commitment and love for our christian schools. With joy we behold each year as there is an increasing number of young people being enrolled as students at CCHS. God is good and his mercies to us are on display year after year at Covenant Christian High School.

So thank you to all those with whom we had the privilege and joy to interview this past summer and welcome to Covenant. On the following column is a list of the new families enrolled into our school.

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- Ben and Emily Bomers (Haylee)
 - Ted and Shannon Brummel (Raeanna)
 - Derek and Leanne Cnossen (Aiden)
 - John and Rebecca DeVries (Matthew)
 - Nathan and Melanie Dykstra (Noah)
 - Jason and Karen Elzinga (Trevor)
 - Doug and Rachel Feenstra (Dylan)
 - Kevin and Audra Gritters (Derek)
 - Jim and Julie Hauck (Kierra)
 - Steve and Deb Hoeksema (Rebecca)
 - Prof. Brian and Michelle Huizinga (Anna)
 - Joe and Heidi Kleyn (Makayla)
 - Phillip and Kristin Kleyn (Zachary)
 - Aaron and Melinda Knott (Annaliese)
 - Scott and Leigh Kooienga (Tyler)
 - Kevin and Amy Kuiper (Brendan)
 - Hib Jr. and Missy Kuiper (Morgan)
 - Frank and Dawn Kuperus (Isaac)
 - Jeremy and Kelly Langerak (Jeremy Jr.)
 - Jamie and Mary Langerak (Anna)
 - Brent and Brittany Looyenga (Calvin)
 - Mark and Candace Meulenberg (Weston)
 - Eric and Melissa Petroelje (Evan and Rylan)
 - John and Sherry Pipe (Everett)
 - Rodney and Julianne Rau (Madison)
 - Chad and Jill Rus (Ella)
 - Joe and Jennifer Schimmel (Mason)
 - Jon and Janis VanDyk (Riley)
 - Clinton and Renae VanderKolk (Benjamin)
 - Bill and Danielle VanOverloop (Hayden)
 - Brandon and Kelly VanOverloop (Thomas)
 - Bryant and Deaana VanOverloop (Sydney)
 - Darren and Stephanie Vink (Abigail)

We welcome our new families to CCHS!



Bring the family and have fun supporting our basketball teams!

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
RICK ELZINGA**



The financial report for the previous school year (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) is included in this issue of the courier. The report compares the actual amount of both revenue and expenses to the budget approved at the annual society meeting. We report that we finished the year with a loss of \$1,200. While a loss indicates that expenses exceeded revenue, it was still less than the \$28,160 budgeted deficit. We are thankful for the many generous contributions, which keep our losses to a minimum.

The main area of work for the Finance Committee is the collection of tuition. A major portion of the budget is tuition revenue. It is important that we receive tuition payments in a timely manner to operate CCHS in a fiscally responsible manner. One of the Board's policies is that tuition accounts must be current at November 1, February 1, and May 1. If you are a family struggling to pay your tuition, we urge you to contact one of the Finance Committee members. We welcome the opportunity to work with you and help come up with a plan to get your tuition payments current.

The annual Support Drive is another responsibility of the Finance Committee. The drive amount for the 2019-20 school year is \$400,000. Past years have shown strong and steady support for CCHS and we have been able to meet and even exceed our drive amounts. Please continue to prayerfully consider this need, as the goal must be met in order to meet all our financial obligations.

Previous boards have done outstanding work in preparing CCHS for fiscal responsibilities by setting up various programs and savings accounts to plan

Sports Gala Fundraiser!

Date: Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Place: Christian Reformed Conference Grounds

Attire: Formal

Tickets: \$30 each

Events to take place: punch bowl with appetizers, small silent auction, speeches, catered dinner and dessert, sports trivia, and a few other special moments throughout the evening.

This fundraiser will be used for assisting the Board with the expansion of our athletic facilities in the next few years.

Contact Nikki Holstege at 616-325-4073 or nicoleholstege@yahoo.com to purchase your tickets.

for future expenditures and long-term growth. Some of these plans include:

Building maintenance: For future major maintenance items like boiler and roof replacement.

Property acquisition: For the purchase of adjacent properties surrounding CCHS.

Medical Reimbursement: For insurance co-pays and to help budget for large increases in premiums.

Technology: To keep pace with the ever-changing world of new technology.

Copier replacement: For purchase of new copiers because of high usage by CCHS.

Textbook replacement: For the purchase of new textbooks.

All of these items are included in the annual budget to help spread these costs out over many years, so that, when the need arises, there will be monies available and there would not need to be large increases in tuition when these funds are needed.

Covenant Christian High School

Profit & Loss Budget Performance

July 2018 through June 2019

	<u>Jul '18 - Jun 19</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
INCOME			
Tuition	\$ 2,212,114	\$ 2,259,840	\$ (47,726)
Church Collections	76,337	70,000	6,337
Pledges & gifts	431,081	385,000	46,081
CCHS Foundation Receipts	33,600	33,600	-
Special Education Receipts	140,843	135,000	5,843
Miscellaneous Receipts	1,207	4,800	(3,593)
Interest Income	2,219	-	2,219
TOTAL INCOME	<u>2,897,401</u>	<u>2,888,240</u>	<u>9,161</u>
EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES			
Teaching & administration	1,437,985	1,462,000	24,015
Substitute Teachers	580	1,500	920
Teacher Assistants	73,970	36,000	(37,970)
Office Staff	48,986	46,000	(2,986)
Athletic Director & Coaches	68,369	64,000	(4,369)
Payroll Taxes	121,508	135,000	13,492
Teachers' Retirement expense	42,767	55,000	12,233
Special Education	159,337	173,500	14,163
Teaching aids & supplies	14,959	16,000	1,042
Technology operating expense	32,000	32,000	-
Technology fund	25,000	25,000	-
Physical education equipment	635	1,000	365
Library	4,100	4,100	-
Science lab supplies	7,241	6,000	(1,241)
Teachers' development	21,468	16,000	(5,468)
Music	6,745	4,500	(2,245)
Band instruments	2,240	3,500	1,260
	<u>2,067,890</u>	<u>2,081,100</u>	<u>13,210</u>
INSURANCE EXPENSES			
Group insurance coverage	266,988	266,988	-
Medical expenses - Rx copays	38,012	38,012	-
Workers' compensation insurance	6,030	7,000	970
General insurance	16,304	17,000	696
	<u>327,334</u>	<u>329,000</u>	<u>1,666</u>

BUILDING EXPENSES

Custodial services	62,115	62,000	(115)
Payroll taxes - custodial	4,800	4,800	-
Utilities	66,010	65,000	(1,010)
Water improvements assessment	3,829	4,000	171
Janitorial supplies	8,611	10,000	1,389
Snow removal	5,850	6,000	150
Trash removal	2,814	2,000	(814)
Grounds maintenance	18,000	18,000	-
General maintenance	64,000	64,000	-
Major maintenance program	60,000	60,000	-
Building furnishings	2,061	5,000	2,939
	<u>298,091</u>	<u>300,800</u>	<u>2,709</u>

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Telephone	6,418	6,000	(418)
Copier replacement	1,500	1,500	-
Equipment repair & replacement	1,896	3,000	1,104
Transportation expenses	438	2,000	1,562
Office supplies	4,529	6,500	1,971
Equipment service contracts	12,283	9,000	(3,283)
Publicity & printing cost	1,324	4,000	2,676
Postage	2,920	3,000	80
Federation dues	5,623	3,000	(2,623)
Graduation expenses	4,009	3,500	(509)
Accounting fees	10,000	10,000	-
Miscellaneous expenses	3,526	5,000	1,474
Property Acquisition	44,000	44,000	-
Debt obligations - facilities	105,000	105,000	-
	<u>203,465</u>	<u>205,500</u>	<u>2,035</u>

PROPERTY EXPENSES

Rental property - utilities	1,820	-	(1,820)
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TOTAL EXPENSES

<u>2,898,600</u>	<u>2,916,400</u>	<u>17,800</u>
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NET INCOME

<u>\$ (1,200)</u>	<u>\$ (28,160)</u>	<u>\$ 26,960</u>
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**BUILDING COMMITTEE
JONATHON KAMPS**



Psalm 127:1

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

The Building Committee keeps this verse in mind as we do our work at Covenant Christian High School. A large portion of our work at this time is planning for the future enrollment increases. The Long Range Planning Committee has given us projections that show CCHS growing substantially in the next 5-8 years. Please know that in preparation for this we have been working hard to set things in order so that future expansions, room sizes and the grounds can accommodate the growing number of students as needed.

The Building Committee has some great helpers in the school and it is enjoyable to see how everyone tries to work as a team to keep Covenant running smoothly and preparing for changes as needed. Our Administrator does a great job of being just enough a part of all the workings of the school so he can inform our committee of things that are needed as they come up. Our Athletic Director is mindful that we need to stay on top of the different portions of the school that deal with his job, and is willing to help our committee as needed. It is very nice to have a maintenance man that is at the school every day and works hard to work with our committee and stay on top of all the different items that are needed to keep a facility like Covenant running smoothly. There are others as well that help the Building Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you for that.

One other relationship that we have been recently trying to strengthen is that of the Building Committee and the Boosters. The Boosters are very excited to do their part for the good of the school, and because so many of the decisions these committees make are related, we are doing our best to communicate regularly. This brings an opportunity for good input from all those in the school that can help us keep our building and grounds running as smoothly as possible.

Some of the major items that have been completed are the additional office for our new Curriculum Director, the remodel of the Technology Room and closet near that office, a small refresh of the concession room, the added drainage in the right field of the baseball diamond due to constant



wetness, and the removal of the trees on the north property.

Your Building Committee is aware that it is a blessing for us to serve you at Covenant so if you have thoughts please do not hesitate to share them with one of the committee. At this time those men are Mike Rau, Brad Bruinsma, Joel Dykstra and Jonathon Kamps.

Thanks be to our God for all He does for us.



What does the Covenant Foundation do?

The work of the CCHS Foundation Board consists of reviewing and evaluating the financial statements and investment holdings, reviewing the reports from the fund-raising committees, and annually meeting with a representative from the investment broker, the Barnabas Foundation.

What are the funds managed by the Foundation Board?

The two funds managed by the Board are the General Fund and the Endowment Fund. As these two balances grow, our gifts to the school can grow as well. The General Fund is used to reduce tuition costs by annual contributions to the school. The Endowment Fund is used for curriculum and teacher professional development and/or educational supplies and equipment.

The two annual fundraisers bringing contributions to the General Fund are the golf outing in the fall at The Mines and a gourmet dinner in the spring at Georgetown PRC (titled the "Taste of Covenant"); usually with a speech and also showcasing the talents of many of CCHS's student body. The 2019 net proceeds from the golf outing were \$24,700 while the net proceeds from the Taste of Covenant were \$21,600. The Endowment Fund began with a donation given to the Foundation in 1998 which has been growing steadily since; contributing a consistent, reliable funding stream to CCHS.

As of September 2019, the total value of the General Fund was \$784,500 and the Endowment Fund was \$267,100 (total value of \$1,051,600).

How can you plan your estate with the Foundation?

Some may think that it is too confusing to set up an estate plan. The Board works with the Barnabas Foundation to help assist those of you who would like to set up an estate plan. A Barnabas representative can meet with you and recommend an estate plan which you can take to an attorney to have the legal documents prepared.

We are all called to honor God in our estates and in the wealth He has given us (Proverbs 3:9 - "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase"). We all should want a plan for our estate that names whom you want

to receive the things you own upon your death. Estate planning is not just for "retired" people and is not just for the "wealthy". Don't think "I'm not old enough" or "I don't own enough" to start a plan. We all should have a plan. We are called to be wise stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us; and estate planning will help us in this calling. I Peter 4:10, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Whatever gifts we have received, let us look at them as received for the use of others.

In the book of Acts, we find a Levite from Cyprus named Joses, whom the apostles called Barnabas. That nickname, translated "Son of Encouragement" or "Son of Exhortation", was probably given to him because of his inclination to serve others and his willingness to do what the church needed of him. He is referred to as a "good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith." When Barnabas sold his land, he laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles and Paul believed that he exemplified a proper perspective on money and property.

Barnabas is an example of a generous spirit when it comes to giving sacrificially to the work of the Lord. Barnabas' act of generosity models what we would today call a "planned gift." God worked so powerfully through the generosity of Barnabas and others "that there were no needy persons among them." (Acts 4:34-35)

Please consider setting up an estate plan now with our Christian School Foundations as the named beneficiary to help them grow!

How can you contribute?

1. Supporting our two fundraisers.
2. Calling your estate attorney and placing our school in your will.
3. If you have a life insurance policy, you can designate some of the proceeds to the Foundation.
4. Consider the benefits of IRA contributions.
5. Mail a tax-deductible check to the Foundation.

Remember, when you give to the foundation it is a gift that keeps giving for many years to come.

Restructuring in the Religion Department

Mr. Kyle Bruinooge

At Covenant Christian High School, the curriculum is organized by departments, with Religion being one of the departments represented. Currently the department chairperson is Mr. Dan Van Uffelen, who primarily teaches Church History. In addition, three other teachers are members of the department. Mr. Karl Dykstra teaches Church History and New Testament Survey, Mr. Scott Van Uffelen teaches Church History and Worldviews, and the undersigned teaches New Testament Survey and Worldviews.

Twenty years ago, the required religion classes were Survey of the Old Testament for 10th grade, Church History for 11th grade, and Cults and Non-Christian Religions for 12th grade. Additionally, Worldviews was an elective course for upperclassmen. Since then, one notable change came with a semester of Church History replacing Survey of the Old Testament for 10th grade. This helped to expand the material that for years had all been covered during the 11th grade year. When the 9th grade was added to Covenant beginning in the fall of 2012, New Testament Survey became a required one semester course for all freshman, and Cults and Non-Christian Religions moved from a 12th grade requirement to a 9th grade requirement. Additionally, Worldviews took its place as a now required one semester course for 12th grade.

For the past eight years, this structuring has served the Religion Department well. However, during the spring of 2019, the Religion Department brought a restructuring proposal that involved a few changes. The two changes involved adding another semester of Church History (Modern Church History) to the 11th grade year, moving one of those current semesters to the 10th grade. The other change was moving Cults and Non-Christian Religions back to the 12th grade, but now as an elective.

The feeling among the Cults teachers was the material could be more suitable for 12th grade, as older students can discuss some of the topics in a way that may be more difficult for 9th graders. Cults served the freshman well as a requirement for eight years, but the department felt that the class could develop better with 12th grade students. Additionally, some of the various cults would be covered in the new Modern Church History class, and are also at

times covered in other classes, like World History and Worldviews. Because the current 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students have all taken Cults, this class will not be offered again until the current 9th graders become 12th graders, during the fall of 2022.

Regarding the addition of a semester of Modern Church History to the 11th grade year, the rationale was two-fold. First, sophomores would now be taking Ancient, Medieval and Reformation Church History during the 10th grade year, a period that covers the first 1600 years of church history. Mr. Dan Van Uffelen wrote the following in the proposal to explain this change:

“The narratives of Ancient, Medieval and Reformation Church History belong together, climaxing in the grand story of the Reformation. From a storytelling perspective, studying Ancient Church History along with Medieval and Reformation Church History is an effective strategy due to the fact that up until the Reformation the Western church was united. The Modern period, on the other hand, introduces the concept of denominations and a dizzying array of religious movements, a concept to be explored in the junior year.”



These three periods of church history work well simultaneously during the 10th grade year. Therefore, 11th graders would now be taking church history from the 1600s to the present, covering both our Dutch Reformed history and the new semester called Modern Church History. To help understand this new semester for the 11th grade, here is another explanation from Mr. Van Uffelen:

“Our students learn about the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches from the Dutch Reformation through today, which is vitally important. But shouldn’t they also know about the church history of the varied denominations that surround us in the Grand Rapids area and around the country? Who are the Methodists? What is that megachurch down the road all about? These are questions our students should have answers to. While we teach our students to appreciate their own Reformed church history, a course on world church history and modern Christianity would help them to further appreciate their own tradition as they open their eyes to the troubling religious developments that surround them. In a word, a broader understanding of modern church history is necessary, especially today.”

Evaluation of our current curriculum is an important work. As the school continues to grow, our departments have grown as well, leading to current classes being developed and new classes being added. The effect of curriculum change is often felt in other departments, as the challenge of both deciding which classes should be required in each grade and preparing student schedules must be considered. Our department heads, along with the entire faculty, are considering changes to their curriculum on a yearly basis, and are discussing together how these changes may affect the school as a whole. The faculty believes that this specific restructuring in the Religion Department will serve the students at Covenant well for years to come. Our goal is a well-rounded, liberal arts education with Christ at the center, and we want our students to be well prepared for life after high school, in whatever vocation the Lord calls them.



Courses Offered	Grade Level	Course Description
New Testament Survey	9	This course is an examination of the letters of the Apostle Paul written to church communities in the first century.
Church History I: Ancient, Medieval, and Reformation	10	This course is a study of the church from the end of the Reformation era through today. The first semester covers the foundational period of Ancient Church History (AD 30-590). The second semester covers the rise of Roman Catholicism during the period of Medieval Church History (AD 590-1517) as well as the triumph of the gospel of sovereign grace during the period of Reformation Church History (1517-1648).
Church History II: Modern World and Dutch Reformed	11	This course is a study of the church from the end of the Reformation era through today. In the first semester, students will study Modern World Church History after the Protestant Reformation (AD 1648-present). The second semester covers Dutch Reformed Church History (AD 1517-present).
Cults	12	This elective is one of the last religion courses a senior may take. In this class the students will use the knowledge they have acquired in previous Bible classes and throughout their life as a foundation to see the errors of the Cults and other Non-Christian religions that are prevalent in our world today.
Worldviews	12	Throughout their instruction in the home, church and school, covenant children have been taught a Reformed, Biblical Christian worldview. This course will enable students to articulate clearly this worldview.

Teacher Profile Mr. Karl Dykstra



1. 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 on the north side of the tracks of Hudsonville, where I live again today. My parents, Brian and Lois, sent my five siblings and me to Heritage Christian School and then to CCHS. We were originally members of Hudsonville PRC before Trinity PRC began in 2001. When I married my wife, Megan Streyle of Sioux Falls, SD, we joined Southeast PRC. Today we are members of Hudsonville PRC, so I like to say I made a full circuit in my ecclesiastical membership. We've been blessed with three daughters, Bailey (10), Norah (9), and Harper (5), all who attend Heritage.

I always wanted to be a teacher, but God's avenue for me in becoming a teacher was perhaps a bit unconventional. During my high school years, we had a pretty severe shortage of ministers in the PRC - similar to our current situation - and I began to have a fierce struggle over whether or not I should consider entering the ministry. I will never forget nor stop appreciating how Rev. Rodney Kleyn, Mr. Travis Van Bemmel, Mr. Joel Minderhoud, and Mr. Cal Kalsbeek all separately gave me thoughtful encouragement to consider the ministry. So, upon graduation from CCHS I entered GVSU with a view to taking classes on Seminary Hill. But after four years at GVSU and then two years at Seminary, I had a renewed burning desire to get into the classroom. I then withdrew from Seminary and returned to undergrad studies to acquire a teaching degree. Presently I'm also completing a master's degree in educational leadership at Cornerstone University.

As to my teaching career, I enjoyed one wonderful year teaching sixth grade at Hope and then I was given the honor of teaching with many of my former teachers at Heritage for three years. I had planned to stay put at Heritage for the duration of my career, but after chairing the 2015 Young Peoples Convention, God placed a desire in my heart to teach our young people. Covenant hired me to teach in our religion department in 2016.

2. Was there a noteworthy experience that helped you decide to work in education?

I once told a student that there *hasn't* been a time when I *haven't* wanted to return to school in the fall. I don't know if I've seen a more perplexed look on a student's face! But, for me, it's true. Returning to school in the fall is simply that natural rhythm of my life. So, in the same way that I'm unable to pinpoint the day of my regeneration, I can't say there was ever a defining moment that helped me decide to work in education. Teaching simply became a "part of me" and I attribute this mostly to the indescribably wonderful ten years of instruction that I had at Heritage Christian School. Nearly every teacher I had there was an absolute master of their craft. I loved entering their classrooms; each was inviting, incredible, inspiring, and safe. They captured both my attention and my heart! I loved them all, because they loved me. While sitting beneath their lively instruction, there were countless times that I would subconsciously think to myself, "Oh, *that* was good! I'm going to do *that* when I teach someday!" So, I can say that it wasn't really college that taught me how to teach (though I did learn a few things); my teaching know-how began by observing my teachers at Heritage. Each of them was special. Each passed on a trick of the trade. And I will never stop thanking my God for them.

3. What is your favorite subject to teach and why?

I'm certainly not the first to have done this, but I've taught a variety of subjects at CCHS; ranging from Church History, Cults & World Religions, World History, Latin, N.T. Survey, and even P.E. I've found enjoyment in all of these. So, at the risk of sounding cliché, I can honestly say that it's not primarily the subjects I enjoy, it's the students.

4. What is the most rewarding aspect about being a teacher?

This question reminds me of a story from my childhood. In my memory, the first time I ever entered CCHS was as a little Kindergartner when our class was invited to perform for the CCHS student body an encore of our Kindergarten program. For this program, my teacher, Mrs. Huisken, asked my friend and I to sing a duet - Psalter 27, which became an instant favorite of mine and still is today! We had already given this performance to our parents and grandparents the week before, but at that first program I wasn't feeling very well, and my performance was a bit lackluster (my parents have the video to prove it - that is, if you can find a VCR). This disappointed me, because already then, I especially loved the second stanza: *I love Thy saints, who fear Thy name and walk as in Thy sight; they are the excellent of earth, in them is my delight!* But, what you should also know about me is that my friend and I were (as I think many boys are) already quite competitive in Kindergarten. And knowing I had been "out-sung" at the first program, there sure as shootin' wasn't any way I was going to let that happen again, especially not in front of a bunch of massive high schoolers. So, when it came time for the two of us to sing our duet, I don't think I really *sang*, necessarily. What came out of me was closer to a sound that evolutionists would perhaps attribute to the Mesozoic Era. (Looking back on this, I've become very thankful for Psalm 100 which says to "Make a joyful *noise* unto the Lord.") Anyway, long story short, since Kindergarten Psalter 27 has always been a favorite of mine, especially that stanza. In many ways it has become the anthem of my life and career. I can say, with only a few momentary lapses, that I really do *love* my students who are *Thy saints*. I do regard them as the *excellent of earth*. Truly, *in them is my delight*. And I find it my supreme honor and reward to be their teacher.



5. What advice would you give an incoming teacher?

Our schools have a supportive community filled with many wonderful people who go out of their way to help the schools exist while also taking the time to show their appreciation for teachers. When I started teaching, I'd get kind, encouraging notes from students, parents, grandparents, and colleagues. And even though I've taken pride in becoming a minimalist, I've never thrown one of these notes away. *Every, single, one* has been placed in a file called "Keep Sakes". My best advice to incoming teachers is to make a file like this. Along with the word of God, these notes make for both great reading and a source of encouragement when you have that terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. And that day will come.

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

I cut my teeth on Charger Basketball when I was seven years old during the "Sweet to Repeat" seasons of '93 and '94. I've been a Charger Basketball enthusiast ever since. The Charger Gymnasium offers everything I enjoy in one place, and it will never lose its luster: good conversation and fellowship, well-coached basketball, lively competition, excellent people watching opportunities, fun-loving student sections – all of which is heightened by both the pageantry of the pep band and our salty Charger popcorn. It's the full package, really. And during these winter months, there's nowhere else I'd rather be on a Friday night.



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