

# THE COURIER

WINTER  
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**COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

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“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 ADMINISTRATOR**  
**Rick Noorman**



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10th grade student. That relationship continued over the years as we each took on different roles within the world of education. While attending Covenant Christian High School, I sat in her Church History classes reading and doing work out of an Ancient and Medieval Church History textbook that she had written for the course. To say she was passionate about exposing the ancient heresies that were rejected by the church would be an understatement. The purpose of these controversies, she would say, would be to bring the truth to light and preserve it for the church today. This same passion and drive for academic excellence led her to regularly take up the work of participating in teacher workshops and seminars where lengthy academic papers on many topics were prepared. These papers are all still available on the website of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools (prcs.org).

**Remembering Miss Agatha Lubbers, 1931-2023**

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
 To the last syllable of recorded time;  
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!  
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing.” --Macbeth



These words, ingrained into the memory of the British Literature students of Agatha Lubbers 50 years ago, are still remembered by many of them. If Miss Lubbers had been present at the recent reunion of the class of 1973, she may have asked to hear it. It was a passion of Miss Lubbers to not only make sure that her students were able to recite it back then, but to also know that it should mean something and elicit a response from them as children of God. It was her conviction that everything that we come upon in our learning is meant to reveal something to us about our covenant relationship with God. During her 30-year tenure as teacher/coach/administrator at Covenant Christian High School she brought this to bear on nearly 1300 students who passed through the doors. On November 3, 2023, the Lord, in His loving care, took Agatha Lubbers to the place that He had prepared for her in Heaven. He knew her as His child, and she knew Him as her Lord and Savior. Now she sees Him face to face.

During my first four years of teaching at Covenant, Miss Lubbers was my colleague. She was someone I could go to for advice and mentoring but also someone who I could have fun with on a professional level. She was a great teacher. She loved being at school. What I most appreciated about her as a fellow teacher was seeing her interest in the big picture of Reformed education. She wasn't only concerned about her own classroom. She gave thought,

time, and energy to the continued development of many different aspects of the school. She wanted to make school fun and enjoyable for the students and she worked tirelessly on the development of a distinctively Reformed curriculum and teaching materials to assist other teachers. At some point, during her years at Covenant, she taught and developed curriculum for the English classes at all three grade levels, Church History, Physical Education, Bible, and Cults and Non-Christian Religions.

We shared a common interest in athletics and the teaching of skills to help kids develop physically. As she coached her teams, I would watch her work with players to get the most out of every one of them. As a small school our teams would always have a few very good athletes and a few who were out there for fun and experience. How she dealt with those athletes was indicative of how she always dealt with people. She would push those who had athletic talent to be the best they could be. She was not going to let that talent go to waste. She would encourage those with less athletic ability, in a kind and gentle way, encouraging them to give all that they had to make the team better. She also dealt with students in the classroom the same way. The students who had great talent were pushed and encouraged, and those who had a harder time with school were led to see

My relationship with Agatha Lubbers goes back 50 years to when I first walked into Covenant Christian as a new

their obligations as covenant children to give all that they had to their work in the school and to living as God's children. Those in need were given extra time, attention, and often a break to help them get back on track.

In 1982 Miss Lubbers took on the role of Administrator at Covenant and held that title for 15 years until her "retirement" in 1997. I did not have the opportunity to teach while Miss Lubbers was Administrator, but I did have the privilege of serving on the School Board during this time. I saw firsthand the organizational and administrative skills that were utilized to lead the school through a period of growth in enrollment and a major building expansion. When I stepped in to fill her position after she "retired", the procedures and processes were in place to allow for a very smooth transition.

It was extremely hard for her to leave Covenant because the students, the teachers, and the programs had become her family and her life. On the day of her retirement celebration, the School Board unveiled a street sign at the end of the school driveway that declared the drive to be known as "Lubbers Lane". Just as that sign stands today so do the contributions that she made to education at Covenant Christian High. I have often been asked by other principals, coaches, and officials, "How is Agatha doing?" or "Whatever happened to that lady that used to be there?" It is obvious that I am working in the shadow of one who was well respected in the world of Christian education. Her "retirement" from Covenant in 1997 led her to the work as administrator/teacher at the newly formed Eastside Christian School. I once again became a colleague as we led our individual schools but maintained contact and consulted about our work.

Miss Lubbers had a long association with the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies. In her early years of teaching, she served as a participant in summer workshops which resulted in the development of curriculum materials still used today in the fields of Church History, Comparative Religions, and Literature and Social Sciences. This work was devoted to assist the Reformed teacher in having a better understanding of the distinctively Reformed nature of the subject for use in the classroom. When she left Covenant to take up work at Eastside Christian, she also took on the work of Executive Director of the Federation. She served in that capacity from 1995-2005. As Director, she was instrumental in the development of several summer seminar/workshops for teachers that covered pertinent topics. She was extremely interested in promoting and aiding the Protestant Reformed Schools. It was because of her initiative with the Federation that our teachers now have the opportunity to receive professional development credits for a course entitled, "Principles and Practices of Reformed Education." Her writings for the promotion of Reformed education have appeared in the "Standard Bearer", "Beacon Lights", and "Perspectives in Reformed Education" periodicals.

Not only can it be said of Agatha Lubbers that she always had a lot on her plate, but also that she always had a very big plate. She had the energy and the determination to see

an idea through to its conclusion. An idea might not work out, but it was never going to be for lack of effort. Her life was dedicated to being the best teacher, coach, and principal that she could be. Everything she did was always done in the context of her faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior and her love for His Church. She had to deal with conflict in the school and a variety of difficult things, such as losses as a coach, the failures of her students, sharing the grief along with her students who experienced losing fathers, mothers, and siblings. She also experienced positive things, such as Alumni returning to express thanks, state championships for the

basketball team, National Merit Scholarships for students, the graduation of students who persevered through trials, and seeing the completion of a building project. All these things were seen by her as works of the Sovereign God who was continuing to build and gather His church. She communicated this in a gracious caring way to each one. Throughout her career and in her private life in retirement, in whatever setting she found herself, before whatever people she was



working with, she defended and

promoted what she believed was right, fairly and judiciously exposing areas of weakness and encouraging people to reexamine their positions.

Agatha Lubbers was a truly gifted individual who used her talents in the service of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To man, it will be a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." To God, it will be to His Glory. The closing quote from an essay written by Miss Lubbers in the Federation's "Literature Studies Guide" published in 1971 aptly sums up her perspective on literature and would apply to all her work in Christian Education.

"In this essay I have aimed to demonstrate that Christian Schools are distinctive schools established to instruct unique students through a purposeful curriculum which includes imaginative literature. The literature selected for use in Christian schools must be analyzed and enjoyed; it must serve as a vehicle for the edification of covenant youth so that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work." —A. Lubbers

From my experience and from my heart, I can say that our schools, individually and as a Federation, are strong and solid institutions of learning, due in great part to the impact of Miss Agatha Lubbers. Thanks be to God for providing the gift that she was to the cause of Protestant Reformed Education.

*Note: Much more could be written about Miss Lubbers' work, life, and influences. For one who was actively engaged in so many spheres of life through nine decades a true recounting would be extensive. This article is limited mostly to my firsthand remembrances. R.N.*



CCHS has opened its doors to a new school year for the 56th time! Thanks be to God for preserving and providing for our precious high school. His faithfulness has resulted in Christ centered education in our classrooms by a dedicated staff who love our Lord and place God at the center of their curriculum.

Throughout its history, CCHS has added classrooms and teachers proportionally to accommodate larger and larger class sizes. During these years the number of administrative and non-teaching support staff has hardly grown! With even larger class sizes expected over the next three years, we cannot ignore the pressing need for additional administrative and support staff.

Over the past year, the Board of Trustees conducted a study of the CCHS administration to prepare for more growth and the imminent retirement of our administrator. Our study included reviews of organization charts and positions of other similarly sized Christian high schools, an interview with an administrator of a neighboring Christian high school, and a review of our own administrative positions and performance. An additional and very valuable component of our study was a survey of our own teaching staff with follow-up interviews.

After the research was completed, the entire Board and the administrator gathered for a strategic planning session on a Saturday morning early this year. The session proved very useful in developing a vision for our future administration.

We'd like to share our major conclusions, and a model for our future administrative staffing:

**Major Conclusions:**

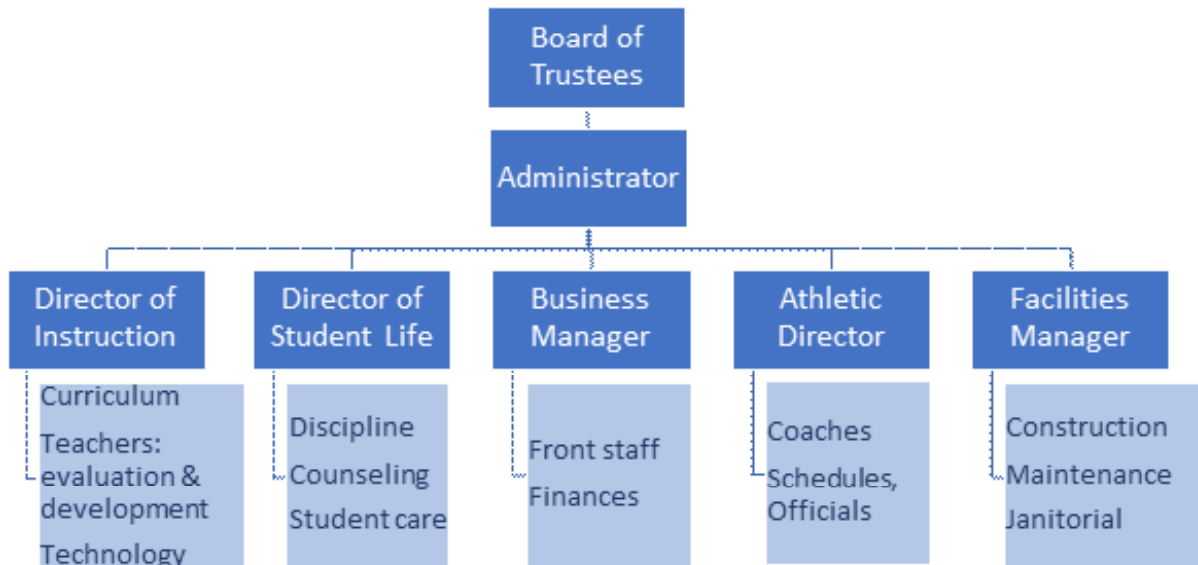
- The present administrative staff is shorthanded and requires additions to serve our increasing student body and teaching staff.
- Additional time and effort should be prioritized for teacher assessment and guidance to enhance development and growth.
- The roles and responsibilities of existing and future administrative staff must be clearly defined through transition periods and communicated to all staff.
- Delegation of duties and training must be planned as we transition to our next administrator and new administrative positions.

**The model for future CCHS Administration:**

A model for our administration organizational chart was developed with the following notes:

1. The positions in the organization chart may be full-time or part-time.
2. Roles and responsibilities under each position may be combined during transition periods.
3. Titles and assignments of roles should remain flexible to accommodate staff competencies.

This past year, additional responsibilities were assigned to our assistant principal and curriculum director to begin the transition by delegating some of our administrator's duties. The Education Committee is planning for the next steps in the transition towards the model organization chart depicted below.



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tim Kaiser



According to our “Board Handbook”, the purpose of the Education Committee is to “advise and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on all matters relating to the educational programs and policies of the Society” and to “perform such other duties as the Board of Trustees shall assign from time to time.” That’s a pretty daunting responsibility, almost overwhelming at times. For those of you who don’t know me, my background and experience are in accounting and finance. I have previously served three terms on two school boards, always as Treasurer and Chairman of Finance. The work on the Education Committee over the past 2-1/2 years has certainly taken me out of my comfort zone at times. But it has been a very good experience, giving me a renewed sense of gratitude for the work that goes on at Covenant Christian High day after day as our covenant youth are educated in the light of God’s Word in every area.

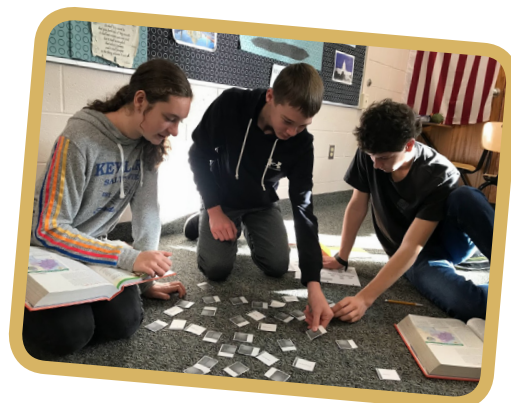
One of the main areas the Education Committee oversees is the curriculum, and there are a few aspects to this oversight. A few years ago, the Board approved hiring Kyle Bruinooge as Curriculum Director. Kyle still spends his mornings in the classroom, and then spends his afternoons as Curriculum Director, working with teachers reviewing and improving and developing curriculum for every department. He also provides regular help to teachers to ensure that the curriculum is being taught effectively, with the Christian view always being emphasized.

Over the past few years, the Board has approved two staff in-service days each year. This is one day each semester that the students are given a day off (that’s just a side benefit for them), and the teachers are given time to reflect on and work on their curriculum individually and as departments. The teachers have found these in-service days to be important and valuable.

Many of our teachers also continue to utilize the Curriculum Enrichment and Development (CED) program to work on their curriculum. The CED program provides funds to our teachers to develop, upgrade, and enhance the curriculum for the classes they teach. This past summer several of our teachers completed CED projects: Macy (Schimmel) Burchett in Speech & Debate; Joel Minderhoud in Physics; Eric Pols in World History; Rick DeVries in Geography; Tom Bergman in Statistics; Dan Kuiper in Advanced Biology; Dylan VanDyke in Computer Apps; Briana Prins in English 9; Karl Dykstra in Cults; Scott VanUffelen in U.S History and Church History; and a combined project in Senior Writing by Macy Burchett, Dylan VanDyke and Jori Yeong. As an Education Committee, it is gratifying to see our teachers using part of their summer working on improving their classes in this way.

We are thankful for our staff, as their love for God and for the students is clearly evident. We are thankful for their work. Please pray for our teachers, as they stand in the place of parents, instructing and leading our young people in the fear of the Lord.

And please continue to pray for us as an Education Committee, and for our Board. The work of overseeing the teachers and curriculum is an enjoyable and important work. Some of the other work that comes before us at times is no less important but can be much weightier. We need and pray for God’s Spirit to give us wisdom and guide us in all the work we are called to do.



**ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Curt Gritters**



In support of another year of Covenant education, the Enrollment Committee met this spring with 44 families requesting enrollment for their first child at Covenant. We continue this healthy practice to ensure new families agree with our mission statement, basis of belief, and admission policy. The Enrollment Committee also began a process of meeting with returning families whose church and/or family circumstances may have changed such that revisiting their agreement with Covenant's mission statement, basis of belief, and admission policy was warranted.

Thanks to considerable efforts by Maria Lotterman, Rick Noorman, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Covenant was able to move forward with the process of enrolling an international student. Much work went into this process, and we are excited to have Oscar Magaña enrolled as our first international student. Oscar Magaña is in the senior class. He and his family are from Cancun and are a contact of First PRC GR's Mexico delegation.

During the required Enrollment Committee interview, Oscar's parents, with the interpreting support of Doner Bartolon, and Oscar personally, all gave a beautiful testimony of their Reformed faith. Oscar is fluent in English and a friend of many. While in th U.S., Oscar is graciously hosted by Scott and Heidi VanUffelen.

The Board thanks returning families for their continued support of Covenant  
and extends a warm welcome to the following new families:

Elsa Baker (Ben & Nick)  
Nate & Rebecca Bol (Gerrit)  
Brent & Brooke Boverhof (Owen)  
Kyle & Audra Bruinooge (Elise)  
Derrick & Heather Buiter (Dalton)  
Pete & Megan Crossen (Ginelle)  
Matt & Joy denHartog (Derek)  
Joel & Connie DeVries (Anna)  
Karl & Megan Dykstra (Bailey)  
Matt & Stephanie Dykstra (Levi)  
Luke & Crystal Engelsma (Kennedy)  
Gerald & Deb Feenstra (Brice)  
Prof. Cory & Lael Griess (Simeon & JohnOwen)  
Steve & Sheila Griffioen (Austin)  
Dan & Kara Gritters (Emma)  
Mike & Tammy Hanko (Taylor)  
Joel & Katie Hassevoort (Anna)  
Alex & Cyndi Kalsbeek (Alanna)  
Nick & Amanda Kamps (Landon)  
AJ & Marie Karsemeyer (Casey)  
Kirk & Carrie Karsemeyer (Hattie)  
Troy & Danae Karsemeyer (Madalyn)

Kyle & Sarah Kooienga (Landon)  
Dan & Amanda Kooienga (Levi)  
Joe & Kathleen Kuiper (Lyla)  
Dan & Jori Kuiper (Micah)  
Joe & Stacey Lubbers (Maggie)  
Hiram & Mayra Magaña (Oscar)  
Jonathan & Nicole Medemblik (Jordyn)  
Joel & Laura Noorman (Madeline)  
Brad & Ericka Pastoor (Leah)  
Jake & Cassie Peterson (Xander)  
Eric & Katherine Pols (Analise)  
Dave & Laura Rutgers (Jakob)  
Tyler & Lindsay Schimmel (Brody)  
Mitch & Lissa Schimmel (Levi & Madison)  
Jordan & Margaret Schipper (Everley)  
Jason & Kimberly Schipper (Levi)  
Tom & Shauna Spriensma (Aaron)  
Mark & Maria VanDyke (Alyse)  
Tim & Amy VanTil (Elsie)  
Marc & Andrea Velthouse (Maya)  
Brandon & Leah Wassink (Wyatt)  
Christy Wigger (Tessa)

**WELCOME NEW FAMILIES!**

## FEDERATION REPORT Curt Gritters



The goal of the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies, according to its constitution, is to “deal with those matters pertaining to PR School Societies in common,” specifically cooperation and coordination, providing seminars, training teachers in Christian principles, and providing recommendations on teacher salaries and benefits. Eighteen PR school communities serving more than 2,300 students are presently members, with Kyle Bruinooge serving as the Executive Director. The following is a summary from Kyle’s annual report to the Federation:

1. Professor Dykstra taught another year of the History & Principles of Reformed Education course at the Protestant Reformed Seminary. This course is offered every three years to teachers, board members, parents, and grandparents, and this year 24 participated, half of them virtually.
2. The Federation, recognizing that policies on sexual misconduct and student safety were a “matter pertaining to PR School Societies in common,” facilitated the exchange of policies, such that in the multitude of counselors there can be safety and wisdom (Proverbs 11, 15, 24).
3. The Federation’s Teacher Training Committee, which launched in 2018, facilitated this past year the mentoring of 15 first-year teachers, 6 second-year teachers, and 5 third-year teachers. Development continues on a program for experienced teachers to prepare prospective teachers (college students) to move into teaching in PR schools. Training and mentorship, the “main work of the Federation... provides spiritual and professional development for both mentors and mentees in our schools.”
4. In addition, writers are working to apply the following doctrines to various grade levels and subject areas, for use in summer workshops: sovereignty, creation, covenant, revelation and scriptural authority, antithesis, and the image of God.

We give thanks to our faithful God for this spirit of cooperation and fellowship amongst Protestant Reformed schools for the sake of nurturing covenant children and bringing glory to His name!

## FINANCE COMMITTEE Eric Dykstra



As we close out the 2023 year, the Finance Committee is grateful to be given the opportunity to work with the continued funding of CCHS. God has given us 411 students this year representing 295 families. With a budget of just over \$3.5 million, we ask for your continued prayers as we manage the finances of the school.

We also ask that the parents keep up on their monthly payments to ensure that funds are available for the operations of the school. At the end of December, families should have 50% of their tuition balance paid. If you are having trouble staying current with your tuition, please be in contact with the committee. We ask all those who are able to prayerfully consider giving towards the Support Drive. To date, we have collected nearly \$300k of the \$495k budgeted amount. The purpose of the drive is to provide another source of revenue for the school in order to keep the costs down for tuition paying families. Your gifts to the Support Drive, whether large or small, are truly appreciated.

Included in this issue is a financial report for the last fiscal school year (July ‘22–June ‘23). This report shows the difference between the actual income and expenses versus the budgeted amounts that were passed by the Society back in the spring of 2022. Overall, we stayed tight to budget with the exception of our health insurance costs. Looking at the loss of \$107k for the year, we want to note that we had \$15k in tuition that was still outstanding, we budgeted for a student body that was 7 students higher than the actual number enrolled (-\$53k) and we began with a \$30k budget deficit. On another note, we are slightly behind on our anticipated church collections for the current school year which accounts for \$105k of our budget. Please keep CCHS in mind with your church collections. We are thankful to our heavenly Father that we are able to meet the continuing needs of the school. And we thank all of you for your continued prayers and financial support.

**Covenant Christian High School**  
**Profit & Loss Budget Performance**  
June 2023

	Jun 23	Budget	Jul 22 - June 23	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	%
<b>INCOME</b>						
4110 · Tuition	\$ 78,529	\$ 51,000	\$ 2,416,127	\$ 2,485,000	\$ 2,485,000	97.2
4200 · Church Collections	5,360	4,000	92,036	95,000	95,000	96.9
4300 · Pledges & gifts	6,154	39,000	454,736	445,000	445,000	102.2
4350 · CCHS Foundation Receipts	-	-	74,000	74,000	74,000	100.0
4450 · Special Education Receipts	87,851	29,370	179,301	148,000	148,000	121.1
4600 · Miscellaneous Receipts	-	370	6,667	5,000	5,000	133.3
4604 · Interest Income	246	-	3,249	-	-	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>178,139</b>	<b>123,740</b>	<b>3,226,116</b>	<b>3,252,000</b>	<b>3,252,000</b>	<b>99.2</b>
<b>EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES</b>						
5010 · Teaching & administration	157,383	151,000	1,806,395	1,812,000	1,812,000	99.7
5030 · Substitute Teachers	-	-	5,721	4,000	4,000	143.0
5035 · Support Staff	6,653	9,000	121,993	119,000	119,000	102.5
5040 · Office Staff	3,472	4,000	68,421	60,000	60,000	114.0
5050 · Athletic Director & Coaches	24,483	23,500	78,742	75,000	75,000	105.0
5110 · Payroll Taxes	14,226	14,000	153,722	166,000	166,000	92.6
5125 · Teachers' Retirement expense	5,099	5,000	56,201	54,000	54,000	104.1
5135 · Special Ed & Academic Support	8,659	6,000	143,971	110,000	110,000	130.9
6110 · Teaching aids & supplies	996	1,000	18,750	18,000	18,000	104.2
6120 · Technology operating expense	7,363	2,500	43,237	53,500	53,500	80.8
6122 · Technology fund	833	834	9,996	10,000	10,000	100.0
6125 · Applied Arts Operating Expenses	737	1,666	11,325	20,000	20,000	56.6
6130 · Physical education equipment	-	-	2,312	2,000	2,000	115.6
6140 · Library	-	-	4,100	4,100	4,100	100.0
6150 · Science lab supplies	380	1,400	5,801	7,000	7,000	82.9
6170 · Teachers' development	100	700	17,727	18,000	18,000	98.5
6180 · Music	-	300	7,314	6,800	6,800	107.6
6190 · Band instruments	-	-	3,893	3,500	3,500	111.2
	<b>230,384</b>	<b>220,900</b>	<b>2,559,620</b>	<b>2,542,900</b>	<b>2,542,900</b>	<b>100.7</b>
<b>INSURANCE EXPENSES</b>						
5120 · Group insurance coverage	(1,525)	30,500	389,444	366,000	366,000	106.4
5130 · Workers' compensation insurance	-	-	6,394	7,500	7,500	85.3
6040 · General insurance	-	-	19,865	19,500	19,500	101.9
	<b>(1,525)</b>	<b>30,500</b>	<b>415,703</b>	<b>393,000</b>	<b>393,000</b>	<b>105.8</b>



**Covenant Christian High School**  
**Profit & Loss Budget Performance**  
**June 2023**

	Jun 23	Budget	Jul 22 - June 23	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	%
<b>BUILDING EXPENSES</b>						
5020 · Custodial services	3,390	5,167	60,223	62,000	62,000	97.1
5110.1 · Payroll taxes - custodial	400	400	4,800	4,800	4,800	100.0
6000 · Utilities	4,689	6,800	71,268	65,000	65,000	109.6
6025 · Water improvements assessment	-	-	3,249	4,000	4,000	81.2
6050 · Janitorial supplies	786	1,300	13,121	10,000	10,000	131.2
6060 · Snow removal	-	-	6,080	6,000	6,000	101.3
6062 · Trash removal	-	180	3,704	2,250	2,250	164.6
6065 · Grounds maintenance	5,946	7,300	53,000	53,000	53,000	100.0
6070 · General maintenance	10,104	4,800	64,000	64,000	64,000	100.0
6090 · Building furnishings	-	-	3,570	5,000	5,000	71.4
	25,316	25,947	283,015	276,050	276,050	102.5
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>						
6030 · Telephone	404	500	5,431	7,000	7,000	77.6
6145 · Copier replacement	-	-	1,500	1,500	1,500	100.0
6160 · Equipment repair & replacement	-	-	1,874	3,000	3,000	62.5
6210 · Transportation expenses	379	-	1,729	2,000	2,000	86.4
6220 · Office supplies	591	600	5,749	6,500	6,500	88.5
6222 · Equipment service contracts	1,095	1,000	13,550	12,000	12,000	112.9
6225 · Publicity & printing cost	-	-	3,020	3,000	3,000	100.7
6230 · Postage	166	100	3,379	3,500	3,500	96.6
6240 · Federation dues	-	-	12,169	9,500	9,500	128.1
6245 · Graduation expenses	1,275	1,100	3,465	4,000	4,000	86.6
6250 · Accounting fees	-	775	12,475	12,500	12,500	99.8
6260 · Miscellaneous expenses	57	500	11,230	6,000	6,000	187.2
	3,967	4,575	75,570	70,500	70,500	107.2
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	258,142	281,922	3,333,907	3,282,450	3,282,450	101.6
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ (80,003)</b>	<b>\$ (158,182)</b>	<b>\$ (107,791)</b>	<b>\$ (30,450)</b>	<b>\$ (30,450)</b>	

# WELCOME OSCAR!

Dear Members of the First Protestant Reformed Church,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health and high spirits. My name is Oscar Magaña Escalante, though I prefer to be called just Oscar. I am truly honored and grateful for the opportunity that you have bestowed upon me by sponsoring my studies here in the United States. Your generosity and support mean the world to me, and I am excited to share a little bit about myself with you.

I was born on March 3rd, 2006, which makes me 17 years old. I am originally hailing from the region of Tabasco, in the south of Mexico, but my family and I relocated four years ago to the city of Cancun, the eastern city of Mexico. This transition brought with it some struggles to be active members of our church in Tabasco, because we were not able to congregate with other members of the church. Every day we pray for the spiritual well-being of our family because it is not easy to live in a city where nobody really wants to engage in the Christian life.

My family consists of my father Hiram Magaña, my mother Mayra Escalante, and my only sibling, Luis Abraham. My father is 43 years old, and my mother is 47 years old. My brother Luis is 22 years old, and he is about to have a daughter around the last week of August, so I am a little down because I will not be able to be with him for the birth of my niece, but I'm going to be praying for them every day, and for their daughter and her future.

Besides my parents and brother, my grandmother is staying with my parents for a while because she wanted to be there for the birth of her great-granddaughter.

I am staying with Mr. Scott Van Uffelen and Ms. Heidi Van Uffelen, they are a great marriage that has received me with open arms, as well as their children. My experience since arriving in Michigan has been nothing short of incredible. The warmth and kindness that I have encountered from everyone have made my initial days here truly memorable. Every interaction, every smile, and every gesture of hospitality has reaffirmed my belief that God has people around the world that are willing to attend to our calling to be Christ's hands and feet in this world. I am humbled by the sense of community and belonging that I have found within the PRC congregation.

I am filled with excitement as I embark on this educational endeavor. The prospect of immersing myself in a new environment, engaging with diverse perspectives, and acquiring knowledge that will shape my future is very motivating. With the support you are giving me, I am eager to explore the academic opportunities that lie ahead, and I am determined to make the most of every learning experience.

Once again, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every one of you. Your generosity has granted me a chance that I will cherish and make the most of.

With sincere appreciation and warm regards,

Oscar



# Faith In The Morning

*by Scott VanUffelen*

Faith is a gift of God. These words are never more clear than at 8:00 every morning in the hallway at Covenant Christian High School. After devotions the faculty and staff trickle out of the teacher's lounge. We stand in the main hallway to finish our cup of coffee, talk about our family or the latest events, and greet the students as they arrive. Many students offer a smiling hello, while others avoid eye contact and pretend there is something important on their phone or up ahead that they want to look at instead. Admittedly the line of teachers can be an imposing gauntlet to face so early in the morning!

Faith Kamps is blessedly different. She is a gift from God for us teachers every morning. (I know she is for the students as well, but I am speaking as a teacher in this article). With her books and binder already in her arms and a bright smile on her face, Faith greets us from afar as she makes her way to the row, or circle, of teachers. She joins us every morning to discuss her day, share her wisdom, regale us with a story of her life, and encourage us on our day. In short, Faith inspires us, lifts us up, and reminds us each day that we walk together, students and teachers alike, by Faith.



Faith Kamps is aptly named for she is a gift from God that we all need in our lives; those who have the privilege of walking closest with her are truly blessed. She is not intimidated by teachers but joins us, almost as a colleague, but truly as a fellow heir of righteousness. She will give a high-five, or negotiate herself onto the table to sit next to one of us. Faith is comfortable with us and we are with her. Her excitement and joy for life are contagious, inspiring us as we set forth to begin our day. Noticeably those who talk with Faith in the morning have a smile on their face and a slight spring in their step as they head to their classrooms.

I have learned from Faith. Faith is diligent and on time. Ringing bells means she needs to get to class, a command she promptly and faithfully obeys. Even if mid-sentence,

when the bell rings, the conversation is wrapped up for she needs to get going. There are other students to talk and to walk with. Order and obedience, even on the simplest of things, are neither a struggle nor a burden, but rather a natural walk for Faith.

Faith is an encourager. Rarely is there a negative word out of her mouth, and if so, she quickly clarifies and becomes flustered that we might think something negative about what she said. As such, her words always bring joy, lift up, and enlighten. Her words are as sweet as she is, and they fall on receptive ears.



Faith is well grounded in life. She is fully aware of what she can and can not do and accepts that. If there is something she can not do, she either tells us a story about how she has tried or tells us of someone who is good at it. Faith is love. Pure and simple, Faith is a gift of love that God brings to us every morning that enables us to see His marvelous hand in all things, in all of our students.

Faith loves her faith. One of the most important weeks of her life every year is Special Needs Week at the Christian Reformed Conference Grounds. Here she not only enjoys her week filled with crafts, games, and nightly entertainment, she professes her faith in song and deeds with those of like faith. In a recent conversation I had with Faith, she was surprised that I had attended the Talent Show at SNW because she had not seen me there herself. I told her I am naturally shy in large events and try to blend in. I am there to see others, not to be seen myself. In true Faith fashion, she admitted that she does not like large groups either but that it is good to get a little bit of attention, sometimes. "Even teachers," she said, "should be recognized some of the time for what they do, and it is OK to be recognized." Sweet Faith. Her words latched onto my heart and have remained there ever since. Faith herself does not like attention any more than I do, but Faith, your words are true for you as well. It is good for you to receive "a little bit" of recognition for the wonderful gift you are to me, to all of the teachers, to our school, to our community, and to the body of Christ. Thank you for being an example of pure Faith.

Faith Kamps is not alone. Many live and walk a life of faith at Covenant Christian High School. They walk, talk, think and live in service of God. There is only one Faith Kamps, but I am grateful that there are many "Faiths" in my life. God is good!

# WELCOME NEW TEACHERS!

Hello! My name is Matt Kuiper and I am very excited to begin this chapter of my teaching career here at CCHS. I am married to Tami and have 3 children. Alyssa and Nicki, have both graduated from Covenant and Dordt University, and Ryan is a junior here at Covenant. I started my education at Calvin College and eventually, 13 years and many schools later, finished my education at GVSU in 2005 with a social studies major and psychology minor. I was also able to get a Masters in educational leadership from Cornerstone University. In my spare time, I enjoy golfing, refereeing basketball, and hanging out with my family.

So now, I am the newest and only member of the Health and Physical Education department. If something goes wrong, I guess I have no one to blame but myself! Teaching health and PE is new to me and I am grateful to James Haveman and Dan Kuiper for the work they did in developing a solid curriculum, one that encourages health in all areas of life, physical, mental, emotional, social, and most importantly, spiritual health. For PE, we are trying a wide range of activities ranging from golf to pickleball in hopes of teaching good sportsmanship and finding a lifelong love of some activity.

I started my teaching career in 2006 at Heritage Christian teaching junior high classes in math, science, social studies, Bible, and PE. Even though I loved teaching junior high and loved my colleagues at Heritage, I often wondered what it would be like at the high school level. It's that wonder that led me, along with a lot of prayer, to accept the position here at Covenant. While I will always be grateful for the friendships I made along the way, I have been blessed so far to be a part of this community at CCHS. I am thankful to the teachers, students, and parents who have welcomed me to Covenant and I look forward to getting more involved here in years to come. Please continue to pray for the current and future teachers in our good, Christian schools.



Hello all, my name is Brian Kalsbeek and I am off and running! I have begun a new race that our LORD in His perfect plan has placed in front of me. My wife's name is Jennifer and the LORD has blessed us with 4 children, Cole, Owen, Grace, and Clair. We are members at Hope PRC and our favorite thing to do mainly is to stay around home and hang out or vacation with our family. We do enjoy spending time with our Cross Country family also and being involved with various running activities. Until now, I had been working at Meulenber Painting for about 17 years and overall I've been in the painting business for just over 30. I have also been coaching Cross Country here at Covenant for the past 15 years.



Ever since high school, the painting business is all I ever knew. I was as happy and content as a painter possibly could be. I fully believed that was where I would be for the rest of my life. In just over a couple short months, however,

that all changed. Our LORD used the means of our principal here at school, who put a bug in my ear to think about the Guidance Counselor opening. To be honest my initial thought, after it was brought up to me and I was given some information about the job was, ABSOLUTELY NOT!! It's just way too much, way too overwhelming, and it's way too late in life for me to start all over again. The more I thought about it though, the more I could not stop thinking about it! Our LORD was now also using encouragement and conversations with a few others. He used past life experiences, and most of all the blessing of coaching the XC teams here at CCHS to convince me that it was His will that I, at the very least, had to give it a shot! One of my greatest passions in life, especially since beginning to coach, had become this growing love to be around the students and around this school! My prayer was that our LORD would use me (a very weak tool) to help and encourage kids in any way possible in their Christian walk based on my past experiences.

So here I am today to serve you as best I can, in any way I possibly can. PLEASE know that! I am very aware of my weaknesses and the lack of knowledge I have when it comes to the majority of what this job entails. So, I will need your patience and help to even come close to figuring it all out and accomplishing one goal at a time. I encourage you to reach out to me anytime with advice or to share with me anything that you feel I could assist you in. Again, my passion and joy is to help and encourage these students, and the rest I will have to figure out with your help. I have so much to learn, but I am extremely

excited to be here, and a big reason for that is the staff that is here and the energy they bring to this school each day! I have felt it already!

1 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.”

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My name is Aubrey Langerak and I began working in the Academic Support room this year at Covenant. I attended Adams Christian School and graduated from Covenant Christian High School in 2022. I started working parttime



at Arrows (Rainbow Grille in Hudsonville) during high school. I began full time there after I graduated and have been there for just over 3 years now. I continue to work there part time as a waitress. I am one of four siblings and my parents are Brad and Esther Langerak. My family and I attend Grandville Protestant Reformed Church.

I heard about this job through the Grandville “Gleaner” and felt a pull to check into it. I really enjoy helping people and assisting in their studies. It is rewarding to be able to use the talents God has given me to help in this Christian school. Outside of working here, I enjoy spending time with friends and family, working out or doing anything active. I love the outdoors (when it’s not too cold) and am always up for an adventure.

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Hi! My name is Ellyse Koole, but I mostly go by Elle. I grew up here in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I went to Adams Christian School and graduated from Covenant Christian in 2020. Right out of high school I worked as a nanny to a wonderful family.

Being back in the school setting now as a staff member and not as a student was definitely a weird feeling at first. But as time goes on, I have become more comfortable.

In June of 2022, I married my husband, Mitchel Koole, after dating for 4 years. We attend Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. I am excited to be back as the new Librarian here at Covenant, and I am also thankful to everyone that has made me feel welcome!



Hello! I’m Stephanie Holstege. Many of you know who I am through my parents Greg and Rhonda Holstege, so I’ll keep my introduction brief. In the spring of 2019, I graduated from Covenant and left all the memories behind me. When I interviewed for the English teacher opening at CCHS this past spring, I couldn’t believe how fast four years had gone!

I attended Cornerstone University, but during my freshman year, COVID-19 hit. This impacted a lot of my education and training going forward.

Growing up, I had always wanted to become a teacher, so it was disappointing that I was not able to be involved in schools as soon as I had hoped. It wasn’t until my student teaching experience at Thornapple Kellogg Middle School (TKMS) that I really had an amazing experience. This made me incredibly eager to begin my teaching career, and that excitement has not fallen short during the few months I have been at Covenant. Although there have been some unique ups and downs, there is no place I would rather be.



Having come directly from student teaching at TKMS, one of the most humbling realizations here at Covenant was the unity of faith that is among the faculty, staff, and students. There is a unique desire to learn more about our faithful Father that has made working here such a privilege. Although it

has been exhausting at times, it has been all the more rewarding. I’m looking forward to the years I spend teaching here, and I pray that God continues to bless the unity of the saints that dwell here together daily.

*Covenant Christian High School*

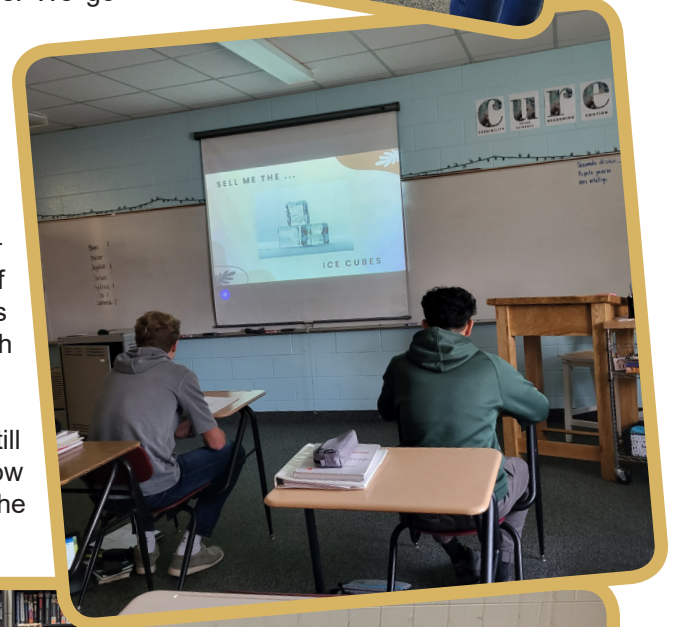
# speech & debate

**Written by: Mrs. Macy Burchett**

This year, Juniors and Seniors at CCHS can take Speech & Debate. This class has been an idea in my brain for quite some time, so I'm glad it's finally come to fruition. The reason I decided to create this class was that I felt as though there was great need in our student body for the skills taught in this class. These skills we learn and practice aren't just skills that students will need for school; they are skills that students will use for the rest of their lives in their jobs, in their homes, in church, and in small groups. The application of this class reaches way beyond the walls of CCHS.

Let me explain what things this class teaches and give examples of some of the activities that these students have opportunities to participate in. Some of the things that this class teaches students are as follows: confidence in speaking in front of people; how to listen effectively; how to write and deliver a speech that resonates with people; how to debate respectfully, persuasively, and in a way that's well-informed; and how to use visual aids. These skills are just the tip of the iceberg of what students learn in this class. We go through a variety of different activities, such as 30 second improv speeches, expressive monologuing, giving speeches on various topics to various audiences, a capture the clue game, fake debates, personal reflection, and so much more. One example of a speech the students recently gave was where they chose their topic first, but then randomly picked an audience to target. For example, one male student wrote a speech on athlete burnout. The audience he picked was women at a women's conference, so this student wrote their speech specifically for women, as opposed to a general population of people. Some of the other random audiences that were up for grabs were high school students, 4th grade students, non-native English speakers, or the elderly.

Since Speech & Debate is in its first semester, I know there are still wrinkles to iron out, but I hope that this class can continue to grow and flourish in a way that benefits the student body at CCHS and the extended body of believers.



COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

# Spanish III

**Written by: Mr. Ethan Mingerink**

The foreign language department at CCHS currently consists of 2 different programs: Latin and Spanish. One change to our program in the past 4 or 5 years is the work to expand the foreign language department to offer an additional year of Spanish. Traditionally, our language programs have consisted of 2 years. With the growth in the prevalence of the Spanish language in the world, as well as in our own communities, there was an increasing need to provide more exposure, practice, and growth in our Spanish class to better prepare the students for using the language in their daily lives (in the workplace, for example) as well as give a better opportunity for those who were interested in pursuing Spanish in their higher education studies. So, after preliminary work was completed (research, proposals, meetings, etc), a SPA 3 course was approved in the spring of 2020. This began the ball rolling to having a SPA 3 class. However, it isn't quite that simple to add a SPA 3 class when SPA 1 and SPA 2 had typically been offered as junior and senior classes. In order to make the transition happen, SPA 1 had to be made available to sophomores. These sophomores would eventually be the first SPA 3 class once they became seniors. Finally, 2 years after the original program was approved, that first group of sophomores became our first SPA 3 class during the 2022-2023 school year.

This first year was exciting because these students were able to do and learn things by the end of the school year that had never been done in our program before. One of the unique things included in SPA 3 is a couple of opportunities to speak with native Spanish speakers and hold 30 minute long conversations. As with all things language-learning, it's not perfect, it's sometimes a bit messy (linguistically-speaking) but communication happens. One of the greatest benefits of the SPA 3 program is the time to help the students build their confidence in these speaking and listening situations. Our



first SPA 3 class of 14 students graduated this past spring.

This year we have our 2nd SPA 3 class, which consists of 16 students, including 1 student live-streaming into class from Randolph, WI. This year is rolling along nicely. As with each of the stops along the way in the Spanish program (SPA 1, SPA 2, SPA 3), the students find themselves participating in vocabulary learning and practice, reading practice, grammar study, listening practice and speaking practice. This includes a wide variety of different games, activities, projects, etc. (oh, and, of course, quizzes, tests, notes, and other regular "school-stuff"). We are also able to extend our thematic discussions from SPA 1 and 2 and really delve into the topic of our Christian witness. I was told to keep this article somewhat brief so I shall end este artículo with this: a hearty thank-you to all those who put time, work, and energy into the development of the Spanish program at CCHS over the years, thank-you to the parents for your time and commitment to Christian education as well as your daily support, and thank-you to the students (current and past) who have helped to lay the foundation and continue to be the vibrant life inside the classroom. You all have been fantastic.

# orchestra

*Covenant Christian High School*

## Written and Directed by: Mr. Eric Phelps

Covenant Christian High School was able to add Orchestra Class as a course offered for credit beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. Orchestra is a performance-based class that meets three times per week in the Music Room, and is open to any high school student in grades 9-12 who play a stringed instrument (violin, viola, cello, bass).

There were only ten students enrolled in the first semester orchestra class offered at CCHS. We had 1 viola player taking the class, and the rest were violinists. This semester, 21 students are enrolled and all instruments are represented. This development has been exciting to see. Having a good mix of the various orchestra instruments adds a lot to the group sound (note: we can always use more violists and bassists!). The class is taught by Mr. Eric Phelps, who is also the conductor of an after-school orchestra called the Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra (PRSO). Our students at CCHS have previous orchestral experience from being actively involved in the PRSO since their elementary days. This course offering provides a way for them to take those skills directly into our music room. If you know a student in K-8 that might be interested in taking orchestra when they get to CCHS, please encourage them to visit the PRSO website at [prso.org](http://prso.org). New members of various ages are always welcome!

The students perform the music they are preparing in class multiple times throughout the semester. These performances can include playing for a retirement community or other special events, as well as shared



concerts with the Band and/or Choirs. For the main concert this semester, the HS Orchestra will join together with the other members of the PRSO for the annual PRSO Concert on January 6 at Saint Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids.

The students perform at various venues throughout the school year. These performances can include playing for a retirement community or other special events, as well as shared concerts with the Band and/or Choirs. The highlight of this semester, the high school Orchestra joining together with the members of the PRSO for the annual PRSO Concert on January 6, 2024 at Saint Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids.

It has been a blessing to be able to offer Orchestra Class at CCHS. The opportunity to have more consistent and frequent time to work together has allowed the students to develop more as a group, and has made it easier to continue to collaborate with the CCHS Band and Choirs for concerts involving the CCHS music department. It will be interesting to watch this program continue to develop at the high school level.







As science teachers, we are privileged every day to teach in the science department – impressing upon the covenant young people the glory of God as displayed in the creation. We do so using a variety of teaching techniques, including interactive lectures, hands-on modeling and experimentation, and collaborative activities (explained below by science department faculty members). Laboratory skill development and use of instrumentation and technology are woven into the curriculum beginning in the freshmen courses and carried through to the senior-level science courses. Throughout this instruction, the Word of God is applied so that the covenant young people are well-prepared to live and work as citizens of the Kingdom of heaven in this life and in the life to come – “to the end that they may *eternally* praise and magnify [God]” (Baptism Form).

**Written by: Mr. Joel Minderhoud,  
Department Chairman**

### ***Interactive Lecture***

The goal of our good Christian schools is to give God all the glory. Our primary reason for establishing CCHS was not to shelter the covenant young people from worldly influences or to merely provide a rigorous academic curriculum. But our primary purpose was, and continues to be, equipping the students to praise God and encouraging their spiritual growth and ability to serve Him in every sphere of life. The science department seeks to accomplish this goal, in part, by showing the students God's attributes, revealing to them the many spiritual truths pictured in the creation, and by calling them to faithful stewardship of God's world. Through interactive lectures, we bring the truth of God's Word to bear on the subject matter and engage the students in discussions of these truths. They learn to discern the errors of the day and to look through the lens of scripture at the spiritual truths that are revealed through this earthly creation.

The science department has unique opportunities to do this work. Science is the study of the marvelous works of God in His “most elegant book” of creation. The interactive lectures of the science department are permeated with demonstrations and experiments that clearly display God's majestic rule in and over His creation. Students repeatedly have opportunities not only to hear of God's marvelous work in creation, but also to see it displayed in powerful and interesting ways and applied to their daily lives.

We confess that each creature is designed by God with its own shape, form, and several offices (Belgic Confession Art. 12). In class, there are numerous opportunities to investigate the form and offices of God's creatures. From the tiny components that comprise every atom (protons, neutrons, and electrons) to the expansive solar system (with the planets in their orderly motion), teachers and students are led to contemplate the invisible things of God. God's fascinating creation, including the tropical rain forests, dung beetles, python snakes, the beautiful rainbow, the processes of photosynthesis and the water cycle, and much, much more reveal to us our amazing Creator. Particularly special is the marvelous human body with, for example, its perfect balance of hormones that regulate so many bodily functions. In all this study, we regularly instruct the covenant young people to see God's power and wisdom that is so clearly displayed in His creation. A greater knowledge of all this content material leads our students to further glorify and praise the almighty God who created all things and who continues to uphold all things.

### ***Scientific Modeling***

God created human beings with senses with which we can experience and



**Joel Minderhoud - 29 years experience**

- Physics (Seniors)
- Chemistry (Juniors)
- Physical Science (Freshmen)



**Jon VanOverloop – 26 years experience**

- Biology (Sophomores)
- Physical Science B (Freshmen)



**Dan Kuiper -15 years experience**

- Advanced Biology (Seniors)
- Biology B (Sophomores)
- Physical Science (Freshmen)



**Jared Noorman – 6 years experience**

- Chemistry (Juniors)
- Physical Science (Freshmen)

emphasizes writing across the curriculum, teaching the students how to present data and explain their results in written lab reports. These exercises hone their critical thinking skills and help them develop into better problem-solvers: a skill useful in and out of the classroom. In all this experimentation, technology is used to assist in the collection, analyzation, and presentation of the data.

### ***Collaborative Work***

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

As a body of believers at Covenant, fellowship amongst students is important in the halls, but also in the classroom. When students work together in groups, a sense of community and cooperation is fostered. By working collaboratively, students learn the importance of empathy, patience, and understanding, and reflect Christian values of love, compassion, and unity. Group work also develops leadership skills and promotes the values of servant leadership, which are integral to the life of

enjoy this majestic and sovereignly designed creation. However, as finite creatures, our senses are limited. As a result, there are some aspects of the creation that cannot be observed directly. This is especially true for the tiny parts of creation (e.g., atoms, molecules, and cells). In such cases, having students develop scientific models plays an important role in their ability to grasp these abstract concepts.

Some ways that scientific modeling can be accomplished in the classroom are by drawing, building, or computer simulation. For example, students often draw models of atoms and then compare and contrast the atomic structure of different elements to help them understand the unique properties of each element. Another example often found in our classrooms is the use of molecular model kits to build substances like sugar (glucose) or DNA. These models help students understand the arrangement of atoms in these molecules and their resulting physical and chemical characteristics. The development of technology has made many computer simulations available for use in the classroom. Balancing chemical equations by use of computer simulation helps students better grasp the concept of the conservation of matter.

Educational research indicates that the use of such models is helpful in actively engaging students’ minds in the learning process. The result is that students better understand abstract scientific concepts and are more likely to remember what they have learned. For the child of God, the ability to better understand the miniscule parts of the creation inspires a sense of wonder and humility, encouraging us to appreciate the majesty of the smallest aspects of the world and recognize the profound wisdom of God.

### ***Laboratory Experiments***

Just as modeling is helpful to understand the miniscule aspects of God’s creation, the opportunity to experiment (sometimes in an inquisitive manner, other times through a prescribed methodology) allows students to visualize the concepts taught in class and work with them in real-life applications. In our courses, a variety of experiments are performed, such as developing a heating curve for water (and comparing it to results from fellow students in Loveland, CO); dissecting cats to see how muscles and bone work together to create movement; determining the rate of the acceleration of falling objects; extracting DNA from strawberries; determining the range of air-powered rockets; determining the acidity of various vinegar brands; measuring and analyzing river and lake water parameters (dissolved oxygen levels; nitrate levels; pH); and comparing the energy content of kerosene versus ethyl alcohol, to name a few.

Experiments also allow students to analyze what they have observed. The students can take measurements and work with their data to demonstrate a topic they have learned or to discover a new idea altogether. The science department

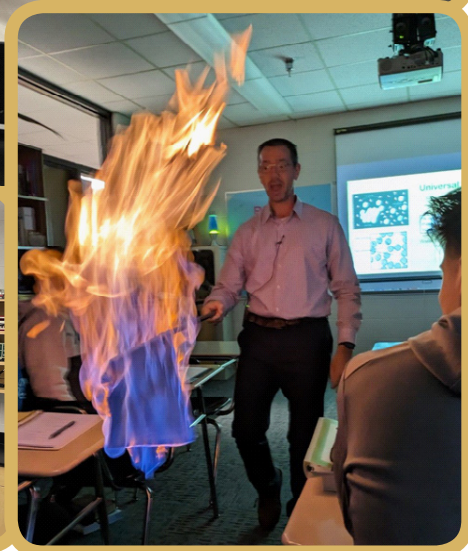
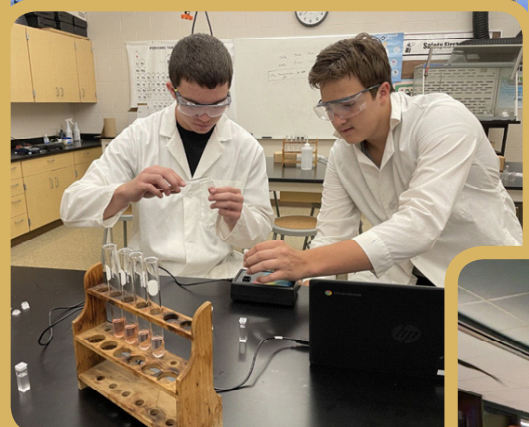
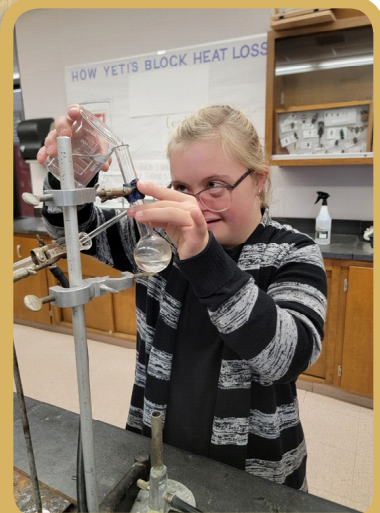
mature member of the body of Christ. Working in groups can be found in each of the science classes offered at CCHS. Lab work is often group oriented (generally for efficient use of materials and equipment). Higher level science classes often require innovative thinking, exploration, and hypothesizing, each of which are derived best through collaboration. For example, students are active in research and organize poster presentations on specific families of elements on the periodic table. Other students collaborate to develop presentations on the interactions in various biomes around the globe. Senior-level students collaborate to write computer programs for their Arduino projects and to make oral presentations about their laboratory results or research-based projects. Throughout the course work in the science department, our students investigate the creation, and they work alongside a fellow believer sharing their awe of the complexities of the earth in which we live and proclaim together, “How great is our God!”

***Equipped and Furnished***

Throughout their high school career, our young people enjoy a rigorous, stimulating, and spiritually-focused science education. In addition to actively participating in the interactive lectures, the students are involved in many collaborative and hands-on experiences. Especially with our incorporation of technology and laboratory instrumentation, our students are well-prepared for future careers in the sciences. More importantly, all our students, whether they will someday enjoy a career in the sciences or not, are prepared to live in this world as God’s covenant people – capable of discerning the philosophies and perspectives of the world and equipped to serve and praise their covenant God. To Him be all the glory! “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).



**Kristen Pawloski – 5 years experience**  
 • Anatomy (Seniors)  
 • Biology (Sophomores)



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



As many of you may be aware, there are some changes happening in West Michigan that affect, or may affect, athletics here at Covenant.

The most immediate change for Covenant is officials. There has been news for several years about the shortage of officials, and the rising average age of officials throughout the state. The lack of younger officials entering the field of officiating and the lack of officials that “stick with it” is very concerning to the MHSAA, as it should be. In an effort to recruit and retain officials, several officials associations in West Michigan have worked with the local OK Conference to increase the pay for officials. It was a very significant increase, over 50% in some cases. While it may be true that Michigan was not keeping up with other states regarding pay, the increase was a “shock to the budget.”



A couple of examples: If we host 9th, JV, and Varsity basketball on a Friday, the cost for officials in 2023-24 will be \$688. In 2022-23 it was \$450. If we host a Thursday 9th/9th/ JV, and a Friday JV/Varsity/Varsity, the current cost this year will be \$1,377. In 2022-23 the cost would have been \$900. In the spring, the umpires for a 4-team softball or baseball tournament will be \$1,200.



These increased costs will not be sustainable in the long term for our Athletic Department. We are going to have to get creative in the future.

Please be aware that our ticket sales are beginning to “Go Digital.” As a trial run this fall,

we sold soccer and volleyball tickets on GoFan, which is an online/digital ticket broker. Although it took a little getting used to, our overall impression has been good. It would be wise for everyone to download the GoFan app, and get it set up on your phone. There are a lot of schools that have gone cashless with their ticket sales, and also their concessions. We should probably start getting used to it.

Congratulations to our Cross Country Teams! Both teams took 1st place at the Regional meet!! At the MHSAA State Finals, the boys captured 3rd place, and the girls took home 5th place. Well done!

I encourage everyone to come on out to Charger Arena and check out a game or two this winter. It's great fun for the whole family!

**WE ARE THE CHARGERS!!**



**BUILDING COMMITTEE**  
Steve Huizinga



“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; So are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:” Psalm 127:4,5a.

In His good will, Jehovah has been pleased to bless our Covenant community with a growing number of quivers, and arrows to fill them. While we rejoice at continued growth, it certainly presents its own set of opportunities and challenges. Much of the current work of the building committee relates to this growth.

As of the publishing of this article, the four classroom addition off the Northwest of the building has been completed, and teachers have settled in. We give a hearty thank-you to Mark Koole for capably managing this project. Along with Mark’s management, we are extremely grateful for the many subcontractors in our community who helped us finish this project at two-thirds of the budgeted \$1.5 million. It is amazing to see the generosity by so many, and it is a tremendous help!

We continue working on a new plan for facility maintenance and cleaning. 2023 saw us looking to hire a new janitor for the first time in many years. After looking at similar schools around us, we decided to follow their model and accomplish our daily janitorial work primarily by hiring student janitors. So far they are doing a great job! For the time being, our “maintenance man” Jon VanDyk has added “Custodial Manager” to his list of duties, while we work to define a full-time facility manager position, due to our ongoing and impending building growth.

On that note, we move ahead with great excitement on a significant building expansion. For 2 years, the ad Hoc committee has been working hard to assemble plans and projected costs for an expansion that has been part of the long range plan, and is necessitated by our expanding student body. We were excited to present this plan to the Society on December 11, and even more excited to see it approved by a significant majority. Now the ad Hoc committee is proceeding full steam ahead to get the plans finalized and the construction started. We give a huge thanks to this group of men as well. Their continued labors are instrumental for accomplishing this addition. (Read more about this project elsewhere in this issue)

While we do this work on new projects, we continue to care for our existing building and grounds. Old carpet has been replaced, mechanical systems are maintained and repaired, and other routine maintenance continues to happen. We are looking to replace our oldest section of roof soon. Finally, we have done separate building walk-throughs with those familiar with the unique needs of handicapped students, and also the Walker Police Department, to ensure our building is both accessible to the right people, and off limits to the wrong. The former walk-through resulted in a few action items, while results from the latter were quite satisfactory. We continue to strive for a safe, functional building that is well suited for the education it hosts.

We thank God for this good, busy work He has given us, and pray for wisdom to be faithful caretakers of all we are given.

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**  
Mitchell Kamps



Phase 3 is underway! The capital campaign committee (CCC) is eager to get to work again. We appreciate the generous donations received from all those who contributed to Phase 1 & 2. Come visit the beautiful outdoor sports complex and four new classrooms.

The current committee members are the following: Tim Block, Scott Koole, and Dale Vink. We plan to bring on at least one more member to the committee for this final phase. Plus look to tap some volunteers to support campaign donation drives over the next several years. If you would like to volunteer, please contact one of the committee members and will get you added to the able and willing list. We are interested in hearing from you

and or a group that would be interested in discussing specific donation options. Possibly specific items for the Industrial Arts building. Or dollar matching programs. The Committee is all ears,so please don’t hesitate to send us an email or give one of us a phone call.

Lastly, The CCC will be meeting early January to formulate the new marketing material and donation options for the society. We look forward to the participation of the whole society along with the broader support base too. The CCC will be working very diligently in contacting and gathering support in the months and years ahead. Please welcome our calls and visits as we work on behalf of Covenant Christian High School.

# Capital Campaign Phase 3



Written by: Eric Dykstra

## Phase 3 Project Approved!

On Monday, December 11, 2023, the School Society approved the construction of the final phase of the conceptually approved three-phase expansion plan. There was a large turnout of members and the final vote was a resounding “Yes.” The proposal for the third phase includes the construction of a new gymnasium, an industrial arts facility, and an auditorium with a music room attached.

### Overall Plan:

Phase 3 consists of a 49,000 square foot expansion to the east of the current building. This will completely fill the existing east parking lot. To replace the lost 100 space parking lot, we will add new parking spaces in the old softball field and part of the old soccer field. This will be a net gain of 200 spaces. This project will require significant sitework to manage water run-off and to expand and reconfigure the parking areas. The proposed start date for this project is late summer of 2024 and with a 2-year construction period, the anticipated completion date is the summer of 2026.

### Specific Areas of Construction:

#### 1. Industrial Arts

On the east side of the new gym, we will build a 5500 square foot area to house our industrial arts classes. This will include a wood shop with a central dust collection system, an automotive/metal working shop with auto lifts, and plenty of storage in both rooms for equipment, materials, and student projects. These areas have overhead door access from the new parking lot to facilitate material loading and vehicle access to the auto shop.

#### 2. Gym and Locker Rooms

Just east of the existing gym area, there will be a new 14,391 square foot gymnasium which will seat 1700-1800 people. Along with the gym will be two new locker rooms, and locker room for officials, additional gym storage, a dedicated concessions area, and two new bathrooms. The gym will be equipped with bleachers and equipment for basketball and volleyball. Spectator access is directly off the new main lobby, where they can also access the bathrooms and concessions area.

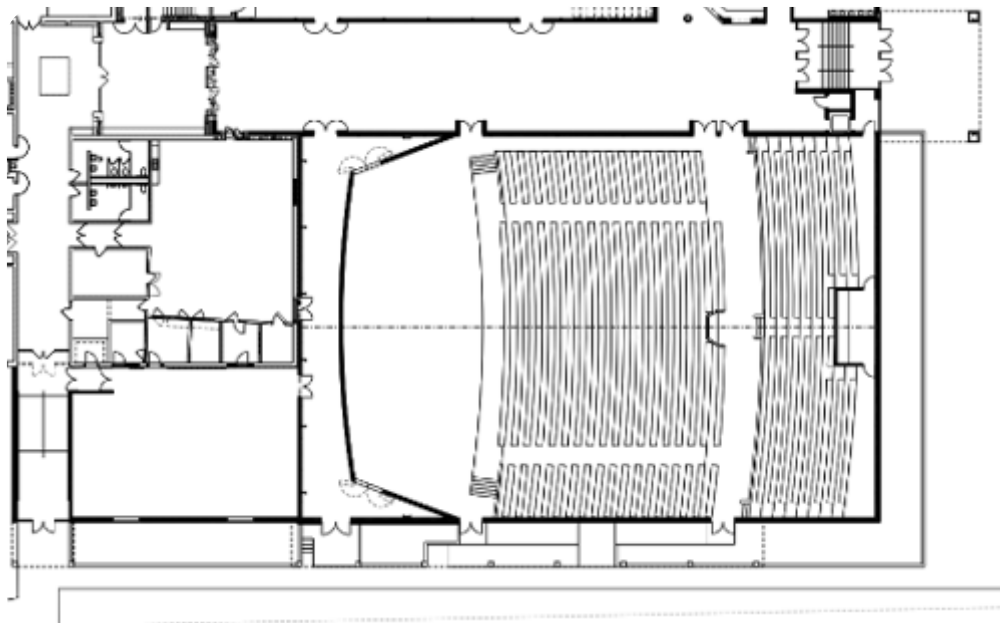
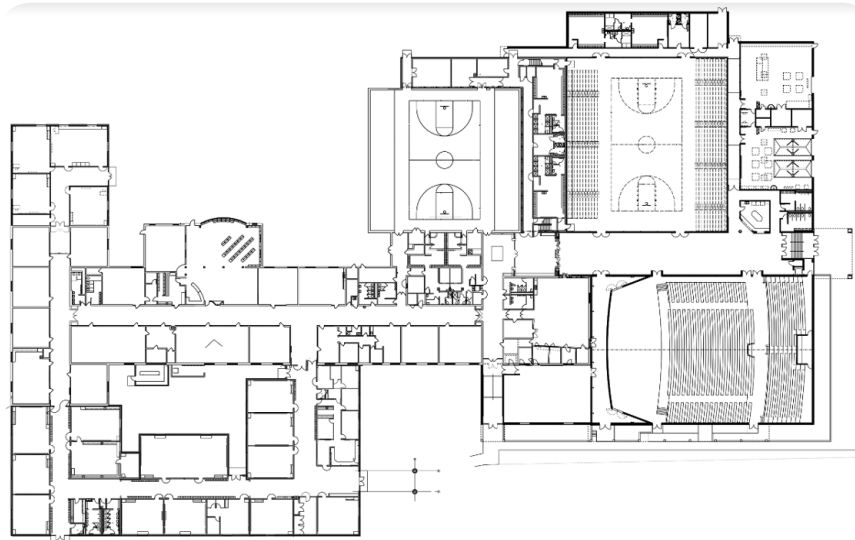
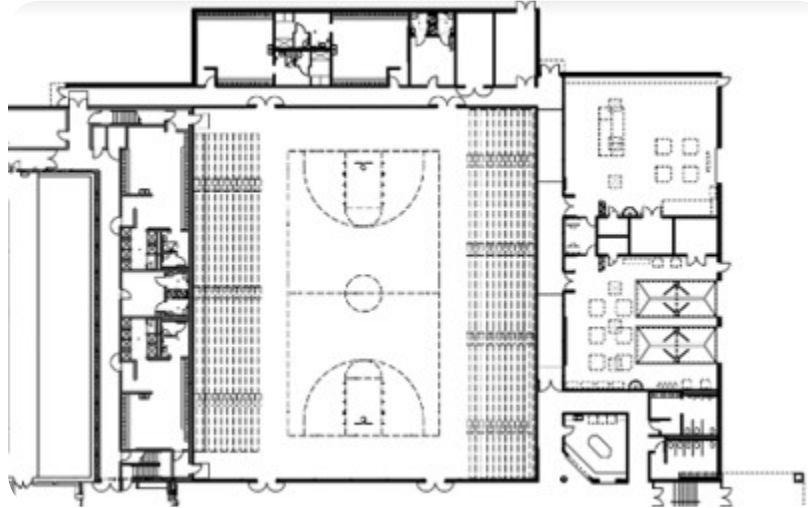


#### 3. Auditorium and Music Room

A 16,776 square foot auditorium will be built south of the main lobby. This auditorium will have seating for 1200 people. It will be fully furnished and contain state of the art audio/visual equipment to facilitate different types of programs, livestreaming, and recording. Significant design and engineering will be done to ensure that the acoustics provide a pleasing environment to host musical programs. South and east of the existing music room a new 3,000 square foot music room will be built which will be designed specifically for the choral classes. Both music rooms will have access to the backstage area of the auditorium, making it convenient for access during performances. Entry to the auditorium comes directly from the main lobby, opposite the gym entrance, and patrons will be able to exit to the south as well.

### Project Costs and Financing

The approved cost of Phase 3 is estimated at \$28.65 million. This amount is broken down into four sections--the auditorium at \$15.7 million, the gymnasium at \$7.2 million, the industrial arts at \$2.9 million, and the site work at \$2.7 million. With donors committed to \$15.7 million and funds already collected of over \$550k, we will be asking for donations to fund the remaining \$12.4 million over the next few years. The Capital Campaign Committee is currently working on a plan to collect and raise funds for this large project. Please watch for information to be coming soon from this committee.



## Overhead View



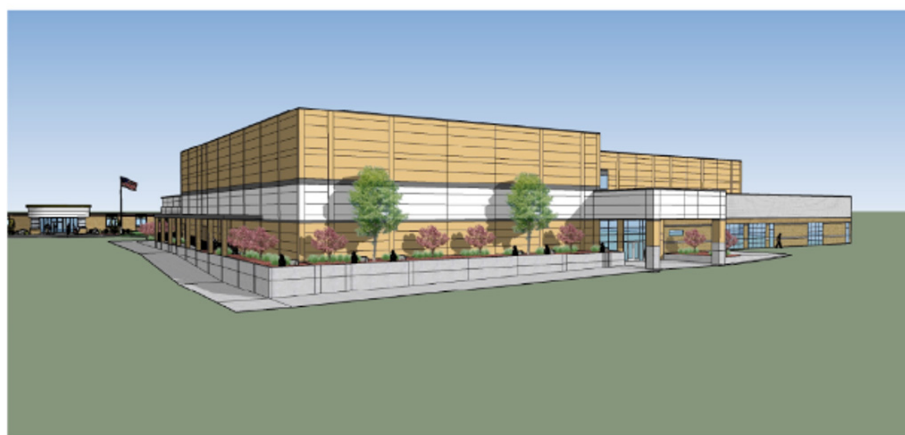
OVERHEAD VIEW  
NO SCALE

## East Elevation



EAST ELEVATION  
NO SCALE

## Southeast Elevation



SOUTHEAST ELEVATION  
NO SCALE