

CALVARY COURIER

February 2024

Calvary CRC Council Highlights

Council President, Mike Jansen, opened the January Council meeting reading from a text called, "Servant Leadership: A Biblical Devotion". As Christian leaders we are called to serve, be humble, and seek others' counsel. We prayed for the new counsel; for all affected by the Perry school shooting including the shooter's family; for Wilma Ryken's family; and for the Iowa caucuses.

The Council thanked Joe Hoksbergen for doing double duty last year as Council President and as Consistory President, filling in for Orville Bultsma.

We are thankful for the many members involved in mission work in Haiti, Abaco, disaster relief and SERVE projects. We are thankful for the praise teams, for the youth leaders who stepped up while Pastor Nate and Caitlin were having a baby, for the many young couples with children, for the faithful service of Arvin & Judy Kelderman, and for the work done to update the Handbook.

We are thankful for meeting over and above the 2023 Calvary budget needs resulting in an extra \$20,000 given to Ministry Shares.

We encourage all members to ask visitors what they thought of the service and encourage them to come again.

Pastor Brad took a one week sabbatical. He read Eugene Peterson's memoir, visited with Mark Quist, a mentor, and George Den Oudstenout; and spent time at the family cabin in Colorado.

The Council has decided to engage Thrive, a ministry of the CRCNA, to help provide the Council with recommendations to consider how Calvary can move forward with clarity around mission, vision, and the possibility of church renewal.

The Council reaffirmed the practice of having a Property Monitor to patrol the church campus during the Sunday morning services. Previously the Property Monitors were elders only, but now will be expanded to include deacons and other church members selected by the deacons. The Property Monitor should move about the building and keep an eye on the parking lots, to assist anyone in need. The Property Monitor should check in on the nursery frequently. The idea is to have a 'watchful eye' on the property. The Property Monitor is not a security guard.

In This Issue:

- Council Highlights
- Reports from the Guatemala Winterim Trip
- Birthday Calendar

GUATEMALA WINTERIM TRIP 2023-2024

Cora Bierma:



For most high school winterim trips, plans are made almost a year in advance. This was not quite what happened to me. In September or October I saw in the high school's daily newsletter that there was an opening in the Guatemala trip. I talked to our leader, Libby Brafhaart, about what that might look like if I were to go. After talking to my parents we decided that it would be beneficial and reasonable for me to go on this trip. It felt like it was a very quick process to get all the important information put together. I didn't really know what to expect from this trip, having not traveled out of the country much. So as my family could tell you, I was stressed the night before we left, but everything was well planned and it all went smoothly.

This trip was a wonderful opportunity to fulfill some of my dreams and stoke some of my hope for the future. I have always longed to travel, and get restless if I'm in one place for a long time. I also love to get to know people and please them in whatever way I can. This trip allowed me to see some of our wonderful world and to get to know people who are so different from us. In a way this trip was eye opening and heartbreaking. Having spent the vast majority of my life in the U.S., I have become accustomed to the leisurely, fast paced, demanding life that we as Americans lead. In Guatemala it was so different from anything I have ever known. The people there are clearly less privileged than even the least privileged in Pella. Yet the people with whom we interacted held more joy and peace than most of us combined. They were content with the simplest of lives. Lilian was the seven year old girl that my group got to build a house for. Her family was living in a tent and the only toys she had were three Barbies and one dress for all three. It was sad for me who had more than 10 times what she has. We brought some toys, coloring books, playdough and the sort with us to

give to her once the house was done. Another thing that really stood out to me was how grateful they all were for what we did. It felt small and insignificant to me but it was life changing for them.

All of this was very important to me but what really touched me and stood out the most was when the mother said, "I'll see you soon" on our last day. Chances are I will never see them again on this earth, but she reminded me that we will meet again one day beneath that unfading light of the Lord. The people on this trip blessed me and brought me closer to God more than I could ever have imagined.

Maddy Van Zee:



For the 2023/24 school year, we decided to go on the Guatemala Winterim Trip. We went as a group of 25 leaving on December 29, 2023 and returning on January 5, 2024. From experiencing a new culture, touring, hiking and building houses, we were able to do it all together while seeing God work in many different ways through a variety of people. We hope to each share a memorable experience and give you a glimpse of what our week looked like.

My hope on going on this trip was to focus on making an impact on someone. Personally, I feel as if this is something that most people want to accomplish when going on mission trips, but to be able to experience it yourself for the first time is a feeling you won't forget. We were able to successfully build three houses for families in need. The houses included a main room with tiling, two windows, a kitchen with a stove and a bathroom. We were split into three teams and took four out of our seven

Maddy Van Zee Continued:

days to finish these houses. On the final day of building, it was heartwarming to be able to see how we were able to change the rest of someone's life just by building a house in four days.

Another blessing was the hospitality we received throughout the whole week. From our host families, Imagin-Guatemala team and even citizens of Guatemala, it is a culture full of pure happiness that comes from a simple "hola" on the streets of Antigua. God worked through each of us in many ways, and I am blessed that I was able to head into this trip as a student of Spanish Immersion where I was able to help translate for those who could not speak Spanish.

Finally, I enjoyed watching God work even through the relationships I was able to not only make but also strengthen with the people on our team. I left Guatemala with Jeremiah 29:11 as it says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." as a reminder that we may not know what the rest of our lives will look like, whether we make our way back to Guatemala or not, God knows our every outcome therefore there is no need to fear.

Brynn Roozeboom:



I signed up for this trip hoping to be able to serve in another country and use my Spanish speaking abilities. I could have never imagined what the Lord had in store for me. This was the first time I had traveled out of the country, and I was kind of nervous but still pretty excited. When we got to Guatemala I was so overwhelmed by all the people and

just how different life looked like outside of the U.S. We spent our first few days exploring Antigua and spending time in God's creation. Seeing the volcanos and an entirely new part of the world was incredible and really spoke volumes about how magnificent our Creator is.

The purpose of this trip was to build a home for a family and use the Spanish we had learned through the Spanish Immersion program. The first day we met our family and were greeted with hugs and excitement. We had never met these people before but the hospitality they showed us was overwhelming. The minute they spoke you could see God's love through every single one of them. The family I built for was a mother and her son. The little boy, Mateo, was always eager to help and was constantly a joy to be around. He had a history of medical problems growing up, and being a single mom, Claudia wasn't able to work and take care of Mateo. They struggled to have enough money to cover all the appointments and were living with their family. Mateo now is healthy and a very energetic boy with a love for life. He was constantly giving us hugs and running around scooping cement or playing with rocks. Claudia is one of the kindest people I have met. She greeted us with hugs and always offered us anything we could need. From the moment we met I could see Jesus in her. She was strong, compassionate and amazing. She helped with the house as much as she could and always had a smile on her face. God's love was always pouring out of her and she shared it with everyone she came into contact with.

Throughout the whole week we got to spend time with the neighbors who happened to be Claudia and Mateo's relatives. They sat outside and talked to us while we worked, constantly blessing us with water, snacks and anything they could find.

When I first began spending time with the family I built for, I was in awe of the ways I could see God working. This family was so close and although they didn't have much, they had each other and God's love, which was all they needed. When we presented the house to them there wasn't a dry eye around. Everyone was overcome with joy seeing what we had done and how much we had blessed them. I know the purpose of the trip was to bless this family but I don't think anybody realized how much of a blessing we would receive in return. Being able to see new ways God is working all over the world and being able to be the hands and feet of Jesus that week brought me closer to God in ways I never knew were possible. I am so grateful for the opportunity I got, and I can't wait to see what more God has in store for me.

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Deb Monsma	2 Dave Van Maanen	3 
4 Pat Ribbens	5 Luella Bandstra- Johnson *	6 Vern Van Zanten* Elma Beyer* Andrea Vander Ark	7 Lisa Groenendyk Wayne Vande Zande	8 Sue Robinson	9 Leanne Jansen	10
11 	12 Briar Gritters	13 Bianca Kanis	14 Kevin Bolt	15 Jan Jungling Grace Van Ryswyk* Ruby Rus	16 Michelle Gritters	17 Joel Verhoef
18	19 Andrew De Haan Wil Stallinga *	20	21 Audrey Veldhouse*	22	23 Mike Jansen Sheri Plate	24 Carol Ribbens Edwin Roose Sharon Roose Curtis Vink Lincoln Pommer
25	26 Cobie Spoelstra* Bethany Holesinger	27	28 Joel Gritters Pastor Sheldon	29 Joy Van Beek		