



The Newsletter

October 2025

glorify God in all we do,
grow with Him daily &
go with Him to share
His love.

To *everything*
there is
a season
and time
to every purpose
under
heaven

Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

October at a Glance

- 3. 9:30pm-11pm 5th Quarter for 5th & 6th grade students
- 5. Deacon Nominations today
Communion Sunday
- 13. 6:00pm Elder/Deacon Meetings
7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
- 15. 2pm FRC is in charge of Nursing Home Services
- 17. November Newsletter Deadline
5th Quarter for 7th & 8th Graders
- 20. 9:30 am Faith Bible Study
3:00 pm Patience Bible Study
- 25-26: Pastor Brian will be gone
- 29: 5-7pm Soup and Pie Supper for Missions
- 31: 4:00 pm Downtown Harvest Festival

Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise & Worship Service
- 10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time
- 10:10 Sunday School for all ages

*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evening:

- 6:00 pm Family Night Supper
- 6:30 pm Pioneer Clubs for 1st-5th grades
- 6:30 pm Middle School Remnant
- 7:30 pm High School Remnant

CONTACT INFORMATION: 712-754-2783
sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com
www.sibleyfrc.org



web.sermonaudio.com/broadcasters/sibleyfrc/



www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley



YouTube @sibleyfirstreformedchurch566



We've talked a little bit about the social relations of the Children of Light, but I want to focus on that specific subset of relationships that occur between disciples in both the local church and in their relations with believers from other churches, particularly those which have a different theological emphasis from our own tradition.

As I've mentioned several times before in several different contexts, social relations in the fallen world are marked by relational aggression. They are marked both by attack and withdrawal. We meet people and we size them up. Are they going to attack us? Maybe we better guard ourselves by withdrawing to a safe social distance. Or are they somehow weak or damaged, ugly or fat or trapped in sin, or in some other way vulnerable? Teenagers will tell you that's when the wolves begin to circle the weak person and start a coordinated set of social attacks.

But if the truth be told, human beings generally don't grow out of this behavior. We may get a little better at masking it in socially acceptable ways, but the heart of darkness still beats in our chest. We are frightened of being attacked. We derive both subtle pleasure and a subtle sense of safety by being the attacker, particularly if we are joined by other attackers. If we are the aggressors, then we are the strong ones. That means we're secure from the attacks of others, at least for the moment.

Men and women both do this, but in different ways. Men's aggression is traditionally more out loud and out in front. If a guy doesn't like you, usually he'll insult you, yell at you, get up in your face, and maybe pop you in the nose if he thinks you deserve it. Women tend to band together and ostracize and try to destroy the target's reputation behind the scenes and set that person outside of the bounds of what are thought to be "the good people." This leaves them exquisitely vulnerable to further attacks and damage by others. It's been remarked by more than one sociologist and psychologist that what we describe as woke cancel culture is really just the institutionalization of female patterns of social aggression.

Personally I prefer the male pattern. A broken nose will generally heal. A broken spirit rarely heals on its own, and frequently won't completely heal, even with competent help. The old nursery rhyme about sticks and stones vs. words is a cruel, inverted lie. It's the stinging rejection of the words, said by that person you love and esteem, who is supposed to love you in return, and whom you thought had your back, which you will remember on your deathbed.

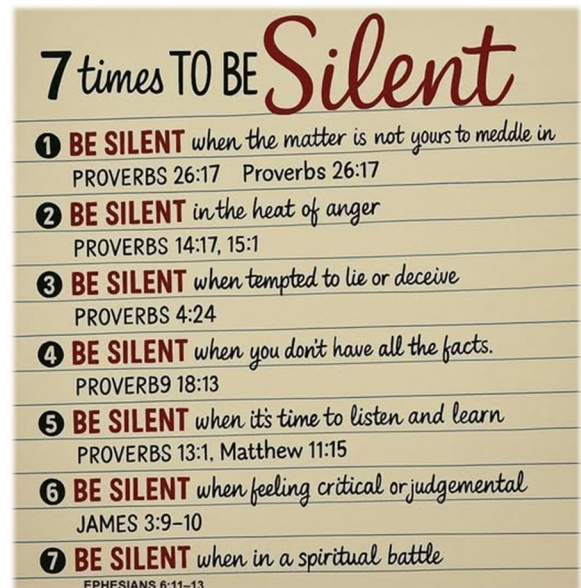
This is why the Apostle James speaks such clear warnings about the tongue and the restless evil that dwells in it. In reality the tongue is just the delivery mechanism. It's the heart that provides the poisonous ammo for the tongue to fire at its chosen targets.

This behavior is present in the church. Some churches are utterly captivated by it. Needless to say, this is a tragic situation. The church is the only place on this planet that absolutely shouldn't be marked by this sort of behavior. The child of light doesn't attack. She doesn't withdraw from others. She stands still in love.

At this point it would be good to define love as the Bible uses the word. Love isn't about warm feelings. It's great to have warm feelings. They make things easier, but they aren't love and they aren't necessary for genuine love to be shown. So what is love? Love is a steady desire for the wellbeing of another person, as God defines that wellbeing, and a willingness to do whatever is within your power to assist in accomplishing that wellbeing. You should memorize that definition. It will help you immensely when it's time to make loving decisions.

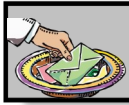
That means the question we ask when we want to love someone is not, "What will make this person happy?" Even less is it, "What will make this person like me?" Both of those merely lead you to flattery, a sin of dishonesty which the Bible condemns. Love says, "God, what do you want to do in this person? How can I help?" Often genuine love means speaking an uncomfortable truth and sticking to it, even when the person doesn't receive it, pitches a fit, and tries to get other people to hate you out of retaliation. We do this, not because the person is bugging us and this is a fun way to retaliate. We do it because we are concerned that the person's sinful patterns of behavior are hurting them and hurting others. The most dishonest thing we can do is flatter them to their face and then run them down behind their back. But I see that in church all the time. I've caught myself participating in it from time to time. I say that to my own shame.

These things should not be found among us at First Reformed. We need to ruthlessly eliminate them. Immediately. Start by simply speaking less, and considering if what you do say is absolutely necessary. That will head a lot of evil off at the pass.



Consistory Meeting Highlights September 9, 2025

- MMSA to allow Pastor Brian vacation time on October 25 & 26 to perform his niece's wedding in St. Louis.
- MMSA to allow Pastor Brian a week of vacation in early November to travel to Florida



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through September 27:

- **General Fund: \$252,274.19**
Budget: \$363,794.52; 69% of budget
 - **Benevolent Fund: \$8771.64**
Budget: \$61,125; 12% of budget
 - **Building Fund offerings to date: \$1020**
- *****

Average Monthly Offering Needed:

\$35,493.29

Total Ben./Gen. Offerings through July 26

\$37,598.60

*Total Ben/Gen offering does not include
"Special Monthly Offering" donations as they
are technically not part of the estimated budget.*

Special Offering for October



**Good News!
Great Joy!**
Pack a box. Impact a life.

Faith In Action for October: Center of Hope



Clean your closets and bring any winter coats, scarves, mittens and caps, that are in good shape, to church. They will be put to good use.

Pull for The House, Pull for Margaret!



#MargarettStrong

**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
Upper Midwest

Tabs may be placed in the box on the Information Center

1 Samuel Trivia Time

1. My granddaughter-in-law was barren. Who am I?
2. At the news of my death, my wife went into labor and bore a son but was overcome by labor pains. Who am I?
3. Who said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son."
4. Among David's wives was a woman named Abigail. What was her first husband's name?
5. I was almost put to death because I ate honey! Who am I?
6. In the battle during which Eli and his sons died, the Philistines took the ark of the covenant to their camp at Ashdod. How long was it before they returned the ark to the Israelites?
7. Who was the king of Gath who was brought a man that looked like David but who acted like he's insane?
8. Saul chased David around a mountain in the Desert of Maon that was later called Sela Hammahlekoth. What does that name mean?
9. What priest of Nob gave David and his men consecrated bread to eat?
10. How much did Goliath's armor weigh in modern-day measurements?

Praise and Worship Greeters

- 5: E: Chris and Teresa Hurlburt
C: Cody and Kristen Hurlburt/family
W: Mike and Mary Hustoft
- 12: E: Merlyn and Julie Janssen
C: Jeannette Juffer
W: John and Jan Juffer
- 19: E: Dennis and Dar Jurgens
C: Karen Keiper
W: Brady and Ashilyn Klaassen
- 26: E: Clint Klaassen/family
C: Joanne Klaassen
W: Kevin and Laurel Klaassen

Willing Hands Group

Willing Hands Group #4

will be responsible for
services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Karen/Dale Honken
- Marcia/Dick Oldenkamp
- Pam/Duane Vande Hoef

Pastoral Visitation Link

To allow easy Pastoral Visit Scheduling
a new link has been created.

Please visit the following link:

[https://calendly.com/
frcpastorbrian](https://calendly.com/frcpastorbrian)

Or scan the QR Code. Please
contact the office if you have
questions or would like to
personally schedule a visit.



Children & Worship during the service



	Leader	Helper
5:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
12:	Deb Kusters	Olivia Daiker/Grace Hoekstra
19:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
26:	Deb Kusters	TBD

Worship Service Nursery

- 5: Chelsey Alexander & Alexis Van Diepen
12: Megan Ackerman & Chelsea Hulstein
19: Peg & Curt Van Kley
26: Heidi & Grace Saylor

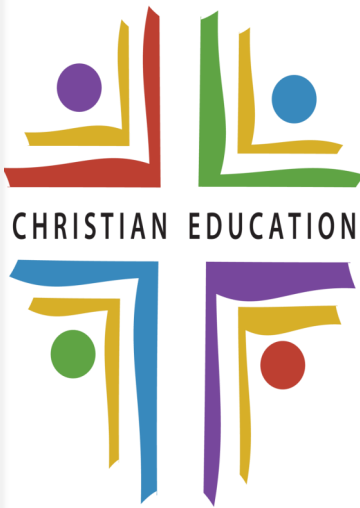
Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 5: Leona Meendering & Joanne Klaassen
12: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
19: Dave and Lesa Stofferan
26: Ger and Barb Van Diepen

Library Volunteers



- 5: Marcia Van Ruler
12: Alfreda Verdoorn
19: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn
26: Ruth Ann Wiersma



Education Schedule:

Please remember the following Weather Cancellations Procedure: If there is NO school, or school is released early due to inclement weather, there will be NO WEDNESDAY Night activities.

Sunday School 3 yr - Adult:

Classes begin September 7 at 10:10 am

- Wednesday Bible Classes (1st-5th grades):

Classes begin September 3 at 6:30 pm.

(No classes on Sept 17 due to coronation)

- MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:

Youth Groups begin September 3

◇ Middle School 6:30pm-7:30pm

◇ High School 7:30pm-8:30pm

(No groups on Sept 17 due to coronation)

College Addresses

Carter Brouwer

2013 Fox Run Trail
Brookings, SD 57006

Ted Van Gelder

815 3rd Ave.
Brookings, SD 57007

Grant Brouwer

1235 SE University Ave
Apt. #205
Waukee, IA 50263

Halle Block

4710 Mortensen Road
Unit 201
Ames, IA 50014

Madison Brouwer

20 Alumni Street
Apt. 206
Vermillion, SD 57069

Keegan De Zeeuw

812 University Street
Box #173
Pella, IA 50219

Maverick Elser

802 6th Street
Apt. 206
Ames, IA 50010

Emma Langstraat

502 12th Ave
Brookings, SD 57006

Michael Block Jr.

208 8th Street SW Unit
PO Box 103
Orange City, IA 51041

Grace Bevers

808 N. University Street
McFadden 304
Vermillion, SD 57069

Ella Bruxvoort

409 12th Ave NE
Sibley, IA 51249

Aiden DeZeeuw

204 Beach Road
Room 532
Ames, IA 50013-0025

Karissa Hulstein

One Triton Circle
#812
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Alex Bosma

100 Currier Hall
N220
Iowa City, IA 52242

Elliot Daiker

Welch Hall, Ayres
255 Richardson Ct,
#1262
Ames, IA 50013-0023

Cole Dykstra

2801 Ohio St.
RID-136
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Sofia Hisek

610 West 4th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

Alexis Hulstein

5929 230th Street
Melvin, IA 51350

Alyssa Jacobsma

1101 W 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Addysen Langstraat

861 Jackrabbit Ave.
Binnewies Hall
303 A1
Brookings, SD 57006

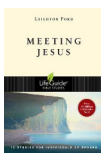
Kaylee Maxwell

4644 200th Street
George, IA 51237

If your student will have a different address for the 2025-2026 school year please let the office know.



Faith Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, October 20 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying lesson #4, "Experiencing God, Experiencing Joy" in our study book *Experiencing God* by *Tim Chester*. Scripture will be Philippians 1:12-30 & 5:4-20. Leader will be Lynn and Rhonda will serve as hostess. All are invited!



Patience Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, October 20 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #6 "Jesus the Source of Power," in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture for the lesson is Mark 9:2-32. Barb will lead and serve as hostess.

Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!

****Message Discussion and Application Bible Study****

Fellowship Hall at 6:00 pm Sunday Evenings

****Digging into God's Word****

This group is currently studying the book of **Ezekiel**.

FRC Fireside Room Sunday Nights at 6:30pm

****From Dust to Glory****

Couldn't make it to Sunday School on Sunday morning?

Join us for a repeat of the class at 6:30 pm in the Fireside Room on Wednesday Evenings

October Family Supper Menu:

- Oct 1:** Taco Tater Tot Casserole
- Oct. 8:** Sub Sandwiches, Pasta Salad, Chips
- Oct. 15:** Pizza Casserole & Roll
- Oct 22:** Baked Potato with toppings
- Oct. 29:** Church Soup & Pie Supper /
No Pioneer Club

All meals include fruit & fresh vegi option, cookies/bars, and milk, water or juice to drink. Ham sandwiches are available in place of the main entree.



October Offering:

We will be collecting pasta! Please bring bags or boxes of pasta noodles, pasta meals, mac and cheese or pasta sauces.

6:00 Family Night Supper

**6:30-7:30pm 1st-5th Grade
Pioneer Clubs Activities**

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR
Like 21:36

Our Missionaries

Dr. Bernadeth Kelly &
Adrian Bobb
Sayuri Kist—Okazaki
Brian & Donna Renes
J.J. & Tim TenClay
Rowland & Jan Van Es
Grace Covenant Ministries
Jeff and Chelsea Lampen

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Jim and Pauline Van Engen | 16. Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar |
| 2. Joel and Angie Van Gelder; Ted | 17. Alyssa Wassman |
| 3. Curt and Peg Van Kley | 18. Pray for our College Students |
| 4. Pray for our College Students | 19. Pray for our Church |
| 5. Pray for our Church | 20. Austin Wassman |
| 6. Dean and Amy Van Marel | 21. Brent and Brenda Wassman |
| 7. Harvey and Marcia Van Ruler | 22. AJ and Jenny Weg; Addison, Alivia, Austyn |
| 8. Jim and Jena Ver Steeg; Aiden, Logan | 23. Lawrence and Ruth Ann Wiersma |
| 9. Bryan Verdoorn | 24. Ryan Wiersma |
| 10. Joel and Kathy Verdoorn | 25. Gary and Jessa Wolter |
| 11. Pray for our College Students | 26. Pray for our College Students |
| 12. Pray for our Church | 27. Pray for our Church |
| 13. Larry and Alfreda Verdoorn | 28. Renae Wolter |
| 14. Roger Verdoorn | 29. Derek and Megan Ackerman;
Quinnley, Sydney |
| 15. Faye Vos | 30. Mitch and Angie Ackerman |
| 16. | 31. Brian and Chelsey Alexander;
Kimberlie, Riley, Brysen |

<u>College Students:</u>			
Alex Bosma	Grace Beavers	Halle Block	Teddy Van Gelder
Elliot Daiker	Michael Block Jr.	Madison Brouwer	
Cole Dykstra	Ella Bruxvoort	Keegan De Zeeuw	Carter Brouwer
Sofia Hisek	Aiden De Zeeuw	Maverick Elser	
Alexis Hulstein	Karissa Hulstein	Emma Langstraat	Grant Brouwer
Alyssa Jacobsma			
Addysen Langstraat			
Kaylee Maxwell			



Random Musings Devotional

By Brenda Sandbulte

For Christmas in 1990, my mom made me a cookbook containing many treasured recipes - Grandma's recipe for freezing corn, Aunt Janet's glorified rice, and some others she thought I'd like to try. It was written in her beautiful handwriting, and I loved it. Because she left blank pages, I added to it - the Steen Ballstand's BBQ recipe (thank you Lorraine), a winter salad from Kathy, and Glenda's cheesy potato hotdish.

There is a family tradition handed down from my Grandma Stark - when you first make a recipe, you write the date, probably the weather, maybe the price of corn (LOL), just something to help you document the importance of that date. I read recipes where I was pregnant with baby #2 or that this was a casserole I was testing out for Mission Fest. Truly my cookbooks chronicle my life.

As you can probably imagine, over time, that cookbook took a beating. I don't remember when the cover fell off. As a toddler, Ashley scribbled on the recipe for chili. Eventually, I needed rubberbands to keep the book from total destruction.

This weekend I purchased two small binders with page protectors and remade the cookbook...and I cried. Silly thing to cry over really, but for some reason, it made me cry. The pages are protected now; Mom's handwriting won't fade, crumbs won't discolor the pages, and I can easily add favorites to it.

So why did it make me cry?

Maybe because in February, 1991, Mom got sick. She contracted herpes simplex encephalitis - essentially cold sores on the brain. Her rare brain disease took a lot from her - and us - many of her memories, her sense of smell and taste, and at times her dignity. She was 47 years old.

I've cherished that cookbook because it was the last gift from my mom - the mom of my childhood - the silly woman who danced with a broom while preparing for my high school graduation party. Don't get me wrong - I'm grateful that my mom is still with us, and at 81 years old, she is a marvel, a living - breathing miracle. But February of 1991, the mom I knew was gone.

Mom's illness changed us all, but out of all that, I also learned so much. I witnessed first hand how a spouse lives out the vow "in sickness and health" not knowing nearly 30 years later, I would be walking the same journey. I watched a woman fight for purpose in her life. She still wonders why God had her live through something so difficult - and maybe we won't know this side of heaven - but she tries to live by her life's mantra, "One Day at a Time, Sweet Jesus (her favorite song)."

This morning, as I get ready for church, I'm looking for some comparison - some metaphor between the cookbook and becoming a new creation in Christ. We so often want to hold fiercely onto our past, but God offers us page protectors for the stories of our lives. We come to him with faded writing, crumbs, and water stains, and He makes our lives new - same ingredients, better hotdish.

I wish I would have taken a picture of that ratty old cookbook before I dismantled it. But now, when I take out my fancy new binder, I'll remember, I'm a new creation - fully protected and loved - just like the recipes for "Shipwreck" or Mom's "Happiness Cake."



Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Russell Gaalswyk
Katie Kruger | 10. Ethel Jurgens
Carol Iedema
Ken Heronimus | 19 Addison Weg |
| 2. Leona Meendering
Joanne Klaassen
Peg Van Kley | 11. Marlin Runia
Lincoln Van Diepen | 21 Kolby Block |
| 4. Eugene Groen
Gretchen Bartelson | 12 Greg Kusters | 23 Halle Block
Kira Christensen |
| 5. Pam Kruger | 13 Jerry Bosma | 27 Pauline Van Engen
Kaylee Maxwell
Katie Klaassen |
| 6. Karen Doorenbos | 14 Derek Ackerman | 29 Janice Runia
Jodie Kruger |
| 7. Marcus De Boer
Theodore Van Diepen | 16 Elijah Sayler
Levi Sayler | 30 Duane Vande Hoef |
| 8. Jane Buysman
Harvey Van Ruler
Megan Travaille | 17 Marlys Brink | 31 Cole Dykstra
Collin Van Diepen |
| 9. Renae Wolter
Addison Mc Dyer
Logan Ver Steeg | | |

~~Anniversaries~~

- 2 Cory & Amy Dykstra 26 years
 4 Alan & Lacey Julius 11 years
 5 Gary & Sandy De Vries 52 years
 10 Dale & Marilyn De Boer 63 years
 12 Levi & Kira Christensen 12 years
 13 Cory & Anne Maxwell 24 years
 20 Terry & Chrissy Ackerman 18 years
 20 Dwayne & Janice Heikes 46 years
 21 Dan and Maureen Heilman 19 years





How long does it take to translate the Bible?

That question is one of the most frequent questions I get asked. One answer to that question could be: less than ever before. Technology and software have revolutionized the process for get-

ting God's Word into more and more languages around the world. What took decades in the past, now is typically completed in years. At the forefront of that transformation sits a computer program called Paratext.

What do you do?

That is another question that I often get asked. I teach people how to use Paratext.

Over the past 30 years, I have been able to train people from around the world on how to use Paratext. In the 1990's, Paratext was more or less a basic text editor. With Paratext, the Bible translator no longer needed to open and close separate files for each chapter of the Bible. With a full Bible project, that meant they had more than 1,000 files to open, close, and maintain. Paratext could load the entire Bible



with a single click. Even in those first versions of Paratext, the translator had the ability to find anything anywhere in the Bible or quickly fix problems throughout the Bible. When introduced to Paratext for the first time, one translator said, I wish we had this program when we started 10 years ago

Over these past 30 years, Paratext has changed tremendously. It has been my privilege to have a part in guiding the development and improvements. At times, I was the voice of those on the field who needed the software to do tasks that were challenging and time-consuming for translators. Over the years, Paratext continued to change so that the work was easier but without sacrificing quality. Faster but also better was the goal. I remember a translator saying, "I want our translation to be perfect." Paratext became the primary tool to manage, maintain, and move towards a faithful and meaningful expression of God's Word in thousands of languages.

It was exciting for me this morning to see a YouTube video which highlights the Paratext program. Typically, promotional videos will highlight translation projects in some exotic part of the world. Those videos are inspirational and I love to watch them. However, this video highlights Paratext. So, in a sense, it highlights what I have been doing these past 30 years.



AUTUMN WORD SEARCH.



WORD LIST

ACORN	HARVEST
AUTUMN	HAYSTACK
BONFIRE	JACKET
BRISK	LEAVES
CIDER	NOVEMBER
CORN	OCTOBER
CRISP	PINE CONE
EQUINOX	PUMPKIN
FALL	SCHOOL
FESTIVAL	SEPTEMBER
FOLIAGE	SQUASH
FOOTBALL	SWEATER
GOURD	THANKSGIVING
HALLOWEEN	TREES

I	C	K	K	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	T	D
X	W	D	P	S	I	R	C	Q	F	H	N	C
R	E	G	A	I	L	O	F	Y	I	C	C	P
O	H	A	Y	S	T	A	C	K	C	U	I	R
O	S	P	E	A	S	K	P	D	W	D	E	P
V	C	G	I	Y	S	T	I	W	Z	B	B	C
T	H	T	N	N	R	B	F	Y	M	O	N	P
H	O	Z	O	E	E	S	Y	E	V	X	R	W
A	O	I	E	B	E	C	T	V	H	Z	O	O
N	L	S	J	V	E	P	O	K	Z	X	C	G
K	V	Q	A	W	E	R	I	N	F	H	B	K
S	L	E	K	S	D	Y	G	P	E	A	P	S
G	L	E	R	I	F	N	O	B	H	L	F	M
I	A	T	E	K	C	A	J	H	N	L	N	A
V	F	G	O	U	R	D	K	Y	O	O	C	F
I	L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	V	W	J	T
N	D	S	Q	U	A	S	H	V	E	E	K	S
G	R	J	G	P	D	Z	Z	I	M	E	V	E
A	I	E	X	Z	U	A	K	X	B	N	D	V
W	T	Q	D	Q	F	M	N	E	E	V	K	R
N	K	B	A	I	F	K	P	M	R	X	W	A
R	Z	D	D	Q	C	J	S	K	U	A	U	H
O	X	X	D	K	H	K	A	I	I	T	G	I
C	F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L	R	N	U	M
A	K	L	X	O	N	I	U	Q	E	B	L	A

First Reformed Church Soup & Pie Supper



Wednesday,
October 29, 2025
5:00-7:00 pm



2026

Phone/Address Directory

Office Phone: 754-2783
Kitchen, Office phone: 754-2366

Visit us at:
www.sibleyirc.org
Facebook: First Reformed Church Sibley, IA
YouTube: Sibley First Reformed Church

1010 6th Street, Sibley, Iowa



First Reformed Church

Reminder:

Photo and info
submissions for the 2026
Church Photo
Directory need to be turned
in no later than October 26
to the church office.



All 5th & 6th and 7th and 8th
Grade Students are invited to
participate in 5th Quarter this
fall/winter. Please take note
of the dates below and make
plans to join the fun!

5th and 6th Grades: October 3

7th and 8th Grades: October 17

9:30-11:05pm at Sibley Legion

Sportsmen's Devotional

Today's Photograph . . . The Narrow Road With the Small Gate is JESUS



Bible Study Verse

Matthew 16:2-3

He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

Thoughts

At some time in your life, you may have heard a wise sailor recite this very old saying, "Red sky at morning, sailor take warning; red sky at night, sailor's delight." Well, you now know where it came from? I used to think those very wise sailors learned it from years on the high seas. I'm sure many of them have.

If you had to guess how long that saying has been around, you would have to go back before the time of Jesus. When Jesus was confronted by the Jewish leaders wanting a sign from Him, He used it to confront their hypocritical way of life.

He simply showed them that they could look at the sky and know how the weather was going to unfold that morning or evening. But, they could not understand the significant events that were unfolding right before their eyes.

Action Point

I think today it is so easy for people to get caught up in what the media and others believe and think about what is happening in our world, and yet, fail to evaluate for themselves what is really taking place.

Jesus wanted people to stop and examine the circumstances in which they found themselves and see the truth - that He was truly the Messiah and the fulfillment of scripture. Our world is not on a road leading in the right direction.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it, (NIV).

The narrow road with the small gate is Jesus. **It is only through Him that one can be saved from his sins and receive eternal life.**

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

It is always important to check area and national weather reports before starting out on any trip. If you have an idea as to how the weather might unfold, you will know how to better prepare. Then, prepare for the unexpected. Last, but not least, read the sky. I cannot tell you how truly accurate that old saying is.

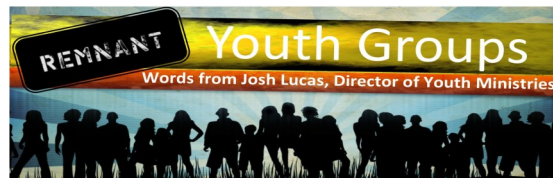
Trivia Time Answers:

1. Elihu (1:1) 2. Phinehas (4:19-20) 3. Saul (26:21) 4. Nabal (25:3,39,52) 5. Jonathan (14:24-26) 6. 7 months (6:1-2)) 7. Achish (21:10-15) 8. Rock of Parting (28:25-28) 9. Ahimelech (21:1-6) 10. 125lbs (17:4-5)

Hello First Reformed Church,

I am sure that all of you have heard the horrible and tragic news of the murder of Charlie Kirk on Wednesday September 10th, 2026. It was a horrific and honestly scary day in America. On that same day a horrible school shooting took place at a school in Colorado. This happened after the tragic murder of Iryna Zarutskya in Charlotte, NC who was stabbed to death while traveling on train. This was also after the fatal shooting that took place at the Catholic school in Minneapolis. Finally, this all happened after the tragic murder of Minnesota house speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband in June. There are sadly so many more tragic moments we can discuss here, but these have been the more horrific ones in recent months. I am honestly saddened by the murder of Charlie because he was a true definition of a man of God, father, and courageous. He was a well-respected man in the realm of politics and a hated man in the realm of politics. I am saddened also because I never had the chance to meet him, and I was making plans to go to one of his speaking events and to hopefully fulfill this wish. I am also saddened because of what this event will potentially do, further divide the country. What did this and the other events teach us? It taught us that evil is present in the United States today. How does this evil exist? I would honestly say it is because we have allowed LGBTQ matters into our nation, we as a nation murder over 3,000 babies every single day, and we as a nation call evil matters good and good matters evil. What can we do? Honestly there are a few things we can do. First, we need to reform the church again. The church has become the battleground for all these ideologies to sneak its way into society, and we need to get the church back on track. That is why in youth group we spend time talking about culture issues and how to give answers to these things that take place. Second, we need to reform the family unit. Families are not making faith a priority, and it needs to go back to that. Families need to be spending time in the word with their families. Families need to spend more time together at the dinner table, not trying to run to the next activity. Third, Christians need to speak out against these issues. For too long the church has been silent because we are too afraid of what people will say or we are afraid of offending people. Well, who are we afraid to offend, people, or God? The truth has been sacrificed, and our nation is paying the price for it. Fourth, I would say that it is not a bad idea for you to take self-defense training. Not just hand to hand combat but also a concealed carry license or something along those lines. People always say, "That will never happen here." Well, a mass shooting and a home murder took place only 3 hours away from here. Trust me, it can happen here. Finally, we need to continue to pray about these issues and ask God to rescue our nation. The time to be silent is no more! We have been silent and not talking about evil or morality for too long, it is time to speak up and speak out. It is now time to stand up for truth, for our kids, and ultimately for God. I know that this is a scary time for all of us right now. This is also a time where we need to make sure that we are right with the Lord. We never know when our last moment on the earth is going to be and that is why it is important for us to have a strong and firm relationship with Jesus Christ. Just remember brothers and sisters, God has got this. He knows what He is doing, and we can trust that He is going to work all of this out for the good. God bless all of you my brothers and sisters, beloved ones in Jesus Christ.

Blessings,
Josh



Dad Jokes with Josh:

Knock Knock. Who's there? Banana. Banana who? Knock Knock. Who's there? Banana. Banana who? Knock Knock. Who's there? Orange. Orange who? Orange you glad I didn't say Banana?



Shoebox Stories...

I was born and raised in a small village in Moldova. Our country was in severe financial instability after the fall of the Soviet Union. Everyone in our family needed to work to make ends meet. Besides his daily job, my dad and the rest of the family also worked long hours gathering and selling walnuts and working on government agricultural fields.



We tended a garden and kept domestic animals in order to have food on the table. Most of our food came from the garden. During the winter, we didn't buy extra food; we ate whatever we had stored. My six siblings and I had to wake up early before school to help feed the animals. When we weren't working, we played outside with other kids. We made up our own games because we didn't have toys.

One day, when I was 5 years old, I was told that something exciting would happen at church the next day. I remember going to bed extra early, hoping that would make the day come sooner. When I woke up the next morning, I felt it was the most glorious day ever. I was so excited to receive my shoebox and couldn't wait to open it.

We opened our shoeboxes once we got home. We sat on the living room floor and took turns opening our shoeboxes. I dumped my whole box on the floor so I could see everything at once. The gifts were wonderful—we had items such as coloring books and soap.

The thing that stood out to me the most was a pack of colorful markers. I couldn't take my eyes off them. There were so many in the pack! I didn't know some of the colors existed. I was so excited I jumped up and started running around the room.

The markers my family had at home were dried out. We would dip them in water just to make them last a little longer. I always wished I could color and draw—the markers were exactly what I wanted. I could hardly wait to show my friends at school the new markers.

"I began a personal relationship with Jesus. He became real to me."

The day I received my shoebox I went from knowing about Jesus to actually knowing Him. I began a personal relationship with Jesus—one where He is my Best Friend—instead of just a powerful Man I'd heard about during Sunday School.

God used my shoebox to reassure me that He really loved me. It showed me that God does answer prayer. God became real and personal to me.

My family and I moved to the United States in 2003 and I now work as a nurse. I pack shoeboxes so I can bless other children. I want to help bring the same joy and happiness to other children that I experienced. I want children across the world to know Jesus.

