

Be thankful for what you have;

you'll end up having more.

If you concentrate

on what you don't have,

Glorify God in all we do, Grow with Him gaily & Go with Him to share His love.

### November at a Glance

7-10: Pastor Brian will be gone

- 11: 6:00 pm Elder/Deacon Meetings
- 7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
- 13: 6:00 pm Spaghetti Supper sponsored by the Remnant Youth
- 7:00 pm Congregational Meeting (no Bible Classes/Youth Group)
- **Communion Sunday**
- **Round Two Cooking Competition**
- 9:30 am Faith Bible Study will meet 18:
- 3:00 pm Patience Bible Study will meet
- 20: 6:30-8:30 Food Find (see picture on back of newsletter)
- 6:30pm Thanksgiving Eve service 27:
- Christmas decorating will follow
- (no Bible Classes/Youth Group)
- Happy Thanksgiving!!

#### \*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise & Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School for 3yrs-Adult
- 10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Bible Studies

#### \*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet \*Wednesday Evenings:
- 6:30-7:30pm 1st-5th gr. Bible Classes
- 6:30-7:30pm MS Remnant will meet
- 7:30-8:30 pm HS Remnant will meet

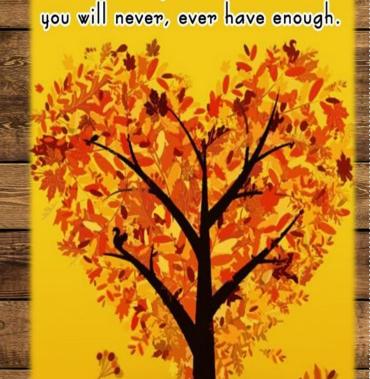
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# From the Pastor's

#### Death to Self

Last month I explained the gospel that Jesus preached: the Kingdom of God has been brought near by the Lord Jesus, and if we want to, we can enter it right now and live in it as a day-to-day reality in this world simply by placing our confidence in the Lord Jesus and taking his yoke upon ourselves in order to learn from him how to live in the easy yoke with the light burden. The Kingdom is a place of complete sufficiency and rest. It is a place of deep, moment by moment fellow-

ship with the Triune God and with his people. If you are in the Kingdom and are learning how to live with Jesus there, you are guaranteed to have everything you need given to you daily. (Matt 7:24-34) You can dwell securely and peacefully in the world, convinced that "the Lord is my shepherd, I shall have no lack or need." (Psalm 23:1)

One of the prerequisites to dwelling in the Kingdom is what we commonly call "death to self." Now, this has sometimes been horribly misunderstood and abused in the past. It has also been roundly rejected as a category of thought by modern Christians who really think of the Christian life in the psychological, pseudo-therapeutic terms of self-actualization and personal fulfillment. Let me just say that the Christian life, properly understood and lived, will give you tremendous self-actualization and personal fulfillment. But those are happy by-products of pursuing the right things in the right ways. If we turn them into goals to be pursued, we will quickly be led astray and end up doing horrible things and justifying them as "what we need to do in order to be happy and have maximum wellbeing." I can't count the number of families I have seen that have been destroyed by one or both marital partner's relentless pursuit of personal fulfillment and happiness. And families are not the only places that our swollen selves want to exploit or avoid. All human institutions and structures are drastically affected by this.

God gave you a self, and it is basically a good thing that you have a self. God has given you a little patch of reality that you have say over. We can call that little patch of reality your kingdom (or queendom if you're sensitive to that sort of thing.) Your kingdom is where what you want done is done. Your kingdom might be as large as a multinational empire, or it might be as small as just your own mind and body. Most likely it is somewhere in between.

Your kingdom was designed by God to function in cooperation with and subordination to God's kingdom. What our First Parents did in the Fall was to take their personal kingdoms out from under God's kingdom so that they could try to run them on their own. We're all still making that same fundamental error. When we do this, we become self-obsessed because our kingdom is now in competition with all the other kingdoms, and there is no referee anymore. So, I come to think of my kingdom as Most Important. When push comes to shove, I want my way. It's really the same category of error as thinking that the nearest telephone pole is the largest because that's what it looks like from where we're standing.

Once we understand this, we have a healthy basis for death to self. Death to self is not the eradication of self. God doesn't want that. Like I said before, he gave us ourselves. He likes us. But we are like a flooding river that has overflowed its banks and is destroying everything in its path. What God wants is for our swollen, inflamed, hypersensitive, outsized, spiritually obese, selves to be brought back to their proper size and function, with our kingdoms back under his Kingdom, where they were designed to be. And, of course, one of the main side effects of inflammation is usually pain. This is true in our bodies. It is also true in our spirits as well. People who are trying to rule and enhance their own kingdom are generally in great pain. They are also frustrated and fearful much of the time.

Therefore, one important aspect of joining Jesus in his Kingdom and living there with him is that we deeply understand and believe that our kingdom is not the most important thing. His Kingdom is. We still have a kingdom, but we submit it to his Kingdom. If there is something good and right to be done, we

do it. We are not passive about the things God has given us to rule over. But we entrust our cares and concerns to him, confident that he is taking good care of us.

We call this "death to self" because, from the perspective of our swollen selves, obsessed with our concerns, it feels like death. We are abandoning our project of life-enhancement and preservation, which is all that we've ever known. It's what we've thought is our basic purpose here on earth. But really, death to self is simply the reduction of ourselves to a position of appropriate smallness.

With that in mind, we can offer a clear definition of death to self. Death to self is the condition of life in the Kingdom in which the mere fact that I don't get my way doesn't disturb me or bother me. It doesn't mean that we don't have a preference or a will. It means that we accept that our preferences and wills are not ultimate. If we can advocate for and achieve our preference without sin or damage to another, then we should be happy to have whatever it is that we prefer. But if we can't, it's not an occasion of any real significance whatsoever. THIS DEATH TO SELF IS THE INDISPENSIBLE FOUNDATION OF ALL PROGRESS TOWARDS GENUINE HOLINESS AND GOODNESS. This is the very definition of losing one's life in order to find it. Jesus perfectly modeled this for us in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had a will, and he articulated his will ("O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..."). But he did not insist on his will ("nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.")

Now, the Devil has laid a great trap for us here, and it is in our best interest to avoid it. Most of us are radically confused about the difference between "the right thing" and "what I want." They are not automatically the same thing. But when we think they are the same thing, we can be relentless (and even cruel) about pursuing our aim because we "only want what is right." Which means our opponents want what is wrong and are at best mistaken. At worst they are stupid. Or evil. And anyway, who are you to question my motives or assume that they are so bad that what I'm doing here is simply trying to get my own way again? I only want The Right Thing, after all.

Now, there are times when we need to stand for what is right, and even argue for it vigorously. But most of the things we stand for and argue vigorously about really aren't The Right Thing in any objective, biblical sense. They are simply our preferences and desires trying to assert themselves and be ultimate. It's a half-clever move to try to dominate others. And the others are painfully aware of what's being done, even if they lack the power to do anything about it at the time.

Let me close by stating something that ought to be obvious but is not. Most of the damage people do in the church is done because people are confusing their preferences with the right thing. Most of the time when people leave in a huff, or sow dissention, or attack and withdraw somehow, it's not over some clearcut issue of right and wrong. It's over their preferences not being granted. I am sometimes gobsmacked by the level of entitlement that many people carry with them into church each week. Far too many have an almost childlike sense that the whole thing does, indeed, revolve around them, and that is, (they think) precisely how it should be.

Church is meant to be a place where we learn how to walk in the way of the One who said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," and die to self, not to enhance and assert our proud and sinful selves. It's not a place for scheming or power games with money or relationship or service. Such things are very sinful, and the Lord regularly kills churches that are dominated by them. Such churches are simply of no use to God. They besmirch his Holy Name. He does not abide with them long, and when his Spirit departs he writes "Ichabod" over the doorframe and generally there's no remedy. This is a frightful judgment. Let us each one learn to lay down his or her tastes and preferences at the threshold of the church door and come humbly seeking to encounter the living Lord in our worship.



#### **Stewardship & Giving**

#### Offering Summary through October 26:

• General Fund: \$284,444.42

Budget: \$443,532.29; 64% of budget

• Benevolent Fund: 13,160.81

Budget: \$68,275.23; 19% of budget
 Building Fund offerings to date: \$1890
 Building Fund - Parsonage Updates: \$6750

# Average Monthly Offering Needed: \$42.650

# Total Benevolent/General Offerings for October: \$41,759.21 (10/1-10/26)

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**

# Sharing Christmas Families



# Faith In Action for November:



Share the love of Jesus, through the power of a simple gift, with children around the world.

Shoeboxes are due back to church by:

### **November 17**

### Trivia Time!!

- 1. Who was hung on a gallows fifty cubits (about 75 feet) high?
- 2. What were the names of the first and last judges of Israel?
- 3. Who was the individual who watched over Baby Moses whie he floated in the bullrushes?
- 4. What was the name of the mother who made a little coat for her son every year?
- 5. What Bible prophet spoke of the killing of the children?
- 6. What type of bird did Noah first send forth from the Ark?
- 7. What was the name of David's first wife?
- 8. The title written above Jesus' cross said, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." What three languages was the title written in?
- 9. Because of Achan's sin he was stoned in what valley?
- 10. What was the name of the sorcerer who was struck blind by Paul the apostle?





Faith Bible Study, will meet on Monday, November 18 at 9:30 am. We will be studying lesson #4, "Renewal Within Defeat" in our study book *Depending on Jesus*. Scripture will be Luke 24:13-35. Lynn will be leader and Jan Harskamp will serve as hostess. All are invited! If you would like to join, please let us know! Hope to see you there!



<u>Patience Bible Study</u>, will meet on **Monday, November 18 at 3:00 pm.** We will be studying lesson #5 "Practice Our Praise," in our book *Heaven: Finding Our True Home*. Scripture for the lesson is Revelation 4. Barb will lead and serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning.

#### <u>6:30 pm Sunday Evening Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!</u>

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

\*FRC Fellowship Hall

#### \*\*Digging into God's Word\*\*

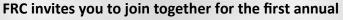
This group is currently studying the book of **Genesis**.

\*FRC Fireside Room\*

All ages, singles and couples are invited to attend. Childcare can be arranged. Come, join a group and let's grow together!

# Consistory Meeting Highlights October 14, 2024

- MMSA for the admittance of Derek Ackerman and Karen Keiper into the membership of First Reformed Church.
- Church Use Approved: Diane Langstraat Nov. 28; Scram family Dec. 29; Catholic Church for luncheons as their basement was flood damaged. This will only be if the Presbyterian Church has a conflict.
- MMSA days off for Pastor Brian: November 7-10 (college visit); January 5-10 (Conference); January 29-Feb 1 (ARC National Meeting)
- MMSA to approve the 2025 budget
- MMSA to set up a donation table on November 24 for donated items to be dropped off for the silent auction benefit for Margarett Travaille.
- MMSA to support the OCMA Welcome to Town Ministry
- MMSA to move forward with Josh's ARC paperwork



# FRC Men's Cooking Competition



-- Round 2--November 17: "Birds of Pray"

(chicken, turkey, or wild game bird)





-- Round 3-December 1:
"It's Starting to Get Chili in Here"

-- Round 4-January 12: "Fresh Wind"

(bean dish)



#### **FRC Book Table**

The church has established a FREE book table. Books are there for you to take and read, and new titles will be added occasionally. Pick up a book that interests you and learn more about

the God we serve.

Mark it up, discuss it with your family, and share it with friends.

These books are there to help you live the FRC mission statement – Glorify, **GROW**, and Go.

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#### **Praise and Worship Greeters**

3: E: Harvey and Marcia Van Ruler

C: Jim and Jena Ver Steeg/family

W: Bryan Verdoorn

10: E: Joel and Kathy Verdoorn

C: Larry and Alfreda Verdoorn

W: Roger Verdoorn

17: E: Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar

C: Brent and Brenda Wassman

W: AJ and Jenny Weg/family

24: E: Lawrence and Ruth Ann Wiersma

C: Ryan Wiersma

W: Derek and Megan Ackerman/family

#### (Thanksgiving Eve Service)

24: E: Brian and Chelsey Alexander/family

C: Kim Alsip/familyW: Bobby and Dee Baker

#### **Worship Service Nursery**

3: Laurel and Natalie Klaassen

10: Anne Maxwell and Ruth Ann Wiersma

17: Pam Vande Hoef and Jenny Weg

24: Abby and Joselyn De Zeeuw

# Children & Worship during the service



Leader

Helper

Deb Kosters

10: Deb Kosters

17: Deb Kosters

24: Deb Kosters

# Willing Hands Group



# November: Group #5

will be responsible for services during the month.

#### **Co-chairpersons are:**

- Dar/Dennis Jurgens
- Deb/Greg Kosters
- Shelia/Harold Van Der Sloot

#### **Fellowship Coffee Servers**

3: Ron and Nancy Dykstra

10: Luella Eggink and Lynn Schram

17: Ed and Jan Harskamp

24: Bill and LaDonn Hartzell

#### **Library Volunteers**



3: Alfreda Verdoorn

10: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn

17: Ruth Ann Wiersma

24: Gert Gaalswyk



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



## **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 As Scheduled

- Wednesday Bible Classes (1st-5th grades):
- No Class on November 13 (Congregational Meeting)
  - No Class on November 27 (Thanksgiving Eve)
    - MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:
- No Remnant on November 13 (Congregational Meeting)
  - No Remnant on November 27 (Thanksgiving Eve)

#### **Andrea Leusink**

**BVU Box 2461** 610 W. Fourth Street Storm Lake, IA 50588

#### **Carter Brouwer**

2013 Fox Run Trial Brookings, SD 57006

#### **MacKenzie Bever**

610 W 4th Street Storm Lake, IA 50588

#### Ted Van Gelder

617 Jackrabbit Ave Brookings, SD 57007

#### **Grant Brouwer**

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

#### Marissa Ackerman

#313 Caldwell Hall Box 2805 Brookings, SD 57007

#### Halle Block

1343 SW Prairie Trail Pkway Meadows South Apt. #302 Ankeny, IA 50023

#### **Madison Brouwer**

901 Rose Street Apt. #244 Vermillion, SD 57069

#### Keegan De Zeeuw

812 University Street Box #173 Pella, IA 50219

#### Makya Dykstra

1631 4th St NE Apt 115 Watertown, SD 57201-8797

#### **Maverick Elser**

612 S. 16th Street Ames, IA 50010

#### Jared Kruger

410 Campus Drive Apt. 4 Calmar, IA 52132

#### **Emma Langstraat**

#120C Brookings, SD 57007

#### **Matthew McDougall**

Room #701 IA Lakes Comm. College 3200 College Drive Emmetsburg, IA 50536

#### **Gannon Rockman**

3099c Nest Ave. Sheldon, IA 51201

#### **Ella Bruxvoort**

405 5th Street Sibley, IA 51249

#### Aiden DeZeeuw

Stalnaker Hall 2875 University Ave. Des Moines, IA 50311

#### Michael Block Jr.

208 8th St. SW **Unit 103** 

Orange City, IA 51041

#### **Apiyo Harberts**

The Boundary 5350 W. Vision Dr. #102

Sioux Falls, SD 57107

#### **Uchan Harberts**

The Boundary 5360 W. Vision Dr. #216

Sioux Falls, SD 57107

#### **Grace Bevers**

Beede Hall Room 227-2 702 E. Cherry Street Vermillion, SD 57069

If your student will have a different address for the 2024-2025 school year please let the office know.



# Shoeboxes are due on Sunday, November 17

\*\*You may bring back your completed boxes at any time.\*\*

It's Operation Christmas Child SHOEBOX time again!! This year our church was once again blessed with FREE BOXES to pack our shoebox gifts in. They will be available on the table in the narthex.

Please take one and start thinking about what you'd like to pack this year.

There are a few completed boxes on the table to give you some ideas.

Visit our website: https://www.sibleyfrc.org/missions/operation-christmas-child.cfm

for more information about shoeboxes.

The shipping and handling cost for *each box* remains at \$10.

There are several ways you can pay this.

- 1. You may make out a check in the envelope attached to the **How to Pack a Shoebox** brochure (available on the narthex table) and place them in the box provided on the table.
- 2. You can use a self-sticking **FOLLOW YOUR BOX LABEL** (available on the narthex table) and follow the instructions to pay online.
- 3. You can go to: **samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/follow-your-box/** to pay for your box(es) and print out labels that you can affix to your finished boxes.





# PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- 1. Karen Jurgens
- 2. Dianne Kass
- 3. Clint Klaassen; Haley, Colt, Katie
- 4. Jamie Klaassen
- 5. Pray for our College Students
- 6. Pray for our Church
- 7. Joanne Klaassen
- 8. Kevin and Laurel Klaassen
- 9. Dave and Donna Kleinwolterink
- 10. Greg and Deb Kosters
- 11. Laurie Kraayenbrink
- 12. Pray for our College Students
- 13. Pray for our Church
- 14. Mitch and Abby Kreykes; Dawson, Paisley
- 15. Martha Krikke

- 16. Chuck and Katha Kruger
- 17. Pam Kruger
- 18. Tim and Jodie Kruger; Jared, Katie
- 19. Pray for our College Students
- 20. Pray for our Church
- 21. Jodene Kruse
- 22. Charlie and Brenda Kuhl
- 23. Dave and Sandy Lamfers
- 24. Arnie and Diane Langstraat
- 25. Mark and Melissa Langstraat
- 26. Pray for our College Students
- 27. Pray for our Church
- 28. Cindy Larson
- 29. Wilma Leusink
- 30. Brad and Sarah Loerts; Parker, Blake, Brynna
- 31. Brian and Megan Loerts; Brysen, Jaxton, Nash, Ellie

College Students: Grace Beavers Michael Block Jr. Ella Bruxvoort Aiden De Zeeuw	Marissa Ackerman Halle Block Tayler Bremer Madison Brouwer Regan Crichton	MacKenzie Beyer Teddy Van Gelder	Carter Brouwer Andrea Leusink
Apiyo Harberts Uchan Harberts	Keegan De Zeeuw Makya Dykstra Maverick Elser Jared Kruger Emma Langstraat		Dalten Bremer Natalie Klaassen
	Matthew McDougall Gannon Rockman		Grant Brouwer Ryan Van Marel



### PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

#### **Assisted Living**

Trudy Dykstra
Ethel Jurgens
Larry & Alfreda Verdoorn
Margaret Calsbeek
Anita Ernst
Ellen Schram
Jane Buysman
Wilma Hatting

#### **The Nursing Homes**

Marlys Brink
Martha Krikke
tian Retirement Home

#### <u>Christian Retirement Home</u>

Helen Vander Veen

#### **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

Draver Iournal -
Prayer Journal



# Celebrations

# ~~Birthday's~~

- 1 Matthew McDougall
- 2 Melissa De Boer
- 3 Jennifer Bruxvoort Lincoln McDyer
- 4 Rodney Hulstein
- 5 Scott Hulstein Jamie Hulstein Hudson Feldkamp
- 6 Parker Loerts
- 7 Wyatt Dykstra Haley Klaassen
- 9 Bennett Hulstein
- 11 Dan Heilman Kavan Beyer
- 13 Jill Boeke
  Julie Janssen
  Anne Maxwell
  Marlin Roelfs
  Steve Van Kley
  Tiffany Wynia

- 14 Paul Doorenbos Karla Crichton
- 15 Bobby Baker
- 16 Dalten Bremer Jaeger Ackerman
- 17 Dwayne Heikes
- 18 Derek Heronimus Jenny Timmer A.J. Weg
- 20 Marvella Harberts Amy Dykstra Amelia Heilman
- 21 Roger Iedema Addysen Langstraat
- 22 Nathan Buysman
- 23 Maverick Elser Kody Wills

- 24 Jennie Schram Braelyn Hurlburt
- 25 Carter Brouwer Teddy Van Gelder
- 26 Mitch Ackerman
- 27 Junior Rasmussen Alyssa Jacobsma Kristen Beyer
- 28 Carl Berkenpas Dave Kleinwolterink
- 29 Kevin Heemstra

### ~~Anniversaries~~



3	Lawrence & Ruth Ann Wiersma	46 yrs.
3	Mitch & Angie Ackerman	17 yrs.
5	Tony and Jamiey Bevers	2 yr.
13	Merlyn & Julie Janssen	48 yrs.
14	Charlie & Brenda Ackerman	32 yrs.
17	Kevin & Nancy Soat	35 yrs.
19	Scott & Marlys Dykstra	42 yrs.
24	Dave & Joann Calsbeek	57 vrs

# **Sportsmen's Devotional**

Today's Photograph . . . This Is When We Need A Friend
To Edify And Encourage Us

#### **Bible Study Verse**

Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit



and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (NIV)

#### **Thoughts**

What kind of hunting partners have we been? Have we imitated Christ's humility or do we brag about our hunting abilities? Have we criticized or encouraged when a friend misses an easy shot? When you and a partner shoot simultaneously and down an upland bird, do you claim it or do you congratulate your partner for a nice shot? When there are different opinions about hunting strategies, do we always get our way? Do we criticize our partner when his dog is out of control and flushes birds out of range?

#### **Action Point**

In all these opportunities we are called to have attitudes like those of Christ. Paul's writings to the Philippians suggest that we imitate Christ in His humility, compassion, love, and unselfishness. There are times when we are hunting that we might get discouraged. This is when we need a friend to edify and encourage us.

#### Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

When making plans and discussing strategies, always propose a question to your partners. Ask them how they feel about an idea rather than telling them what they are going to do.

#### **Trivia Time Answers:**

- 1. Haman (Esther 7:9-10) 2. Othniel (Jdgs 1:13, 3:9) Samuel (1 Sam. 7:8) 3. His Sister (Ex. 2:4)
- 4. Hannah for Samuel (1 Sam 1:20, 2:18-19) 5. Jeremiah (Jer. 31:15) 6. A Raven (Gen. 8:6-7)
- 7. Michal (1 Sam. 18:27) 8. Greek, Latin, Hebrew (John 19:19-20) 9. Achor (Josh. 7:24-26) 10. Elymas (Acts 13:6-12)

Hello First Reformed Church,

There are a lot of great things happening within the youth group here at FRC. I want to talk about one of those things here (I will share more at the congregational meeting in November), and that



thing is youth conferences and camp. Over the course of the last three years I have been frustrated with the conferences that we have been attending, Rocky Mountain High and Power Connection. It has now come to a point where we as leaders have wondered if there is something else out there that we can go to and get the same "experience" with and good Biblical teaching from. We found that answer. Over the summer I dove into the organization, "Reformed Youth Ministries." It is a youth centered organization that was started by a couple of PCA guys and it has grown into a massive youth organization. This organization believes in the mission of students going to conferences so much that they feel the need to hold 8 youth conferences EVERY summer! Where are they held? Well out of the 8 conferences they have 5 locations, Florida (most popular spot), Colorado (Estes Park), California, Maryland, and Texas. One thing I forgot to mention, they hold conferences for both Middle School and High School students! I will share more about this amazing organization at the congregational meeting, but what I can tell you now about them is that they are a strong Biblically based organization, that has a passion for reaching the youth and growing students in their faith. I am so excited to take our high school students to one of these conferences. We were looking at options for taking the middle school students on one as well, but the locations for both of the middle school conferences are waitlisted. Out of the 8 conferences they hold, 5 of them are full and have a waitlist. With that being said, these people know what they are doing. Please continue to pray for us as we continue in our search for a place to go where we can learn and grow.

Again, I will have more information at the congregational meeting so please make sure that you are there to hear about these changes that are happening in the youth group. We hope and pray to have your support throughout the year to help us fundraise for these amazing opportunities. Things in youth group on Wednesday nights are going great! The studies that we are doing with the students are really grabbing their attention and it seems to be really connecting with them. Please remember that we are always looking for youth sponsor substitutes for harvest and planting season, if you are willing and able, please come and talk to me! Thank you all for taking the time to read this.

Blessings,

Josh

#### Dad Jokes with Josh:

I was in the jungle and I saw a lizard standing on its hind legs telling jokes. I turned to a local tribesman and said, "That lizard's pretty funny." The tribesman turns to me and says, "That's not a lizard. He's a stand up chameleon."

# Random Musings Devotional

By Brenda Sandbulte

Do you believe in signs? Some people call them coincidences, others call them messages from above, but do you believe in them?

Moses received some signs that were pretty hard to ignore. I mean...the burning bush and a voice that somehow I believe sounded like the late James Earl Jones...now that's a sign. Me? No burning bush, no "Darth Vader" voice...just some recent moments when I believe God is trying to speak to me. Nothing

earth shattering. No messages about end times. No premonitions about the new job, which is going great by the way. Just small little post-it-notes telling me God is near.

Now don't laugh, but for three days in a row last week, the Wordle answer - along with my first guess - was communication directed at me. I know some will roll their eyes, but to have the word "heart" and the answer "thank" was a reminder that I need a thankful heart. For example, Ashley asked me to find a photo for her, and it required me to dig through a shoebox of pictures. I found photos of my late father-in-law, another of Craig pushing one of our nephews on the swing, and so many of my beautiful girls when they were little. I was so thankful for that moment. My heart was full.

Pastor Steve challenges us to look for God sightings, and sometimes I think we're a little glib about that. We respond (sometimes in a monotone voice) about sunsets or the abundant harvest. Sometimes we applaud when a health issue has been resolved, and those are wonderful God sightings.

I'm married to a pessimist...oh I'm sorry, he calls himself a realist. Often he lists and bemoans all our struggles. The price of groceries, the mortgage payment, the car repairs that couldn't have come at the worst time, don't even get me started on health insurance... grumble, grumble, grumble. (I love him dearly, so I'm not trying to throw him under the bus. It's his realism that has taken care of our family for over 40 years.)

But the signs are truly all around us - a smile from a new colleague (who I still can't remember their name), a conversation with an excited six-year-old Elliana trying to explain first grade victories, the beauty of my mums...all of it...every single one is a sign that God loves us. What was that comedian's line from nearly a decade ago? Oh yeah, "Here's your sign." Are you looking for yours? I guarantee God is sending you one.

The sunsets - they are spectacular this time of year. The harvest - oh it's so good to see the tractors in the field. The sound of children laughing - it's infectious. Even a Wordle solution that reminds a forgetful lady to have a "thankful heart."

# From the library--

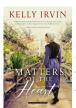
Read below about two of the latest additions to the library

TRACIE PETERSON F

We have started a new series by Tracie Peterson, 'The Heart of Cheyenne,' book #1 is A LOVE DISCOVERED. "Invited by a friend to trek west and help establish the newly formed town of Cheyenne, Edward Vogel is prepared to leave the haunting memories of his wife and son's deaths behind him. The only problem is the corrupt new railroad town wants family men who can establish law and order, and desperation leads Edward to his friend Marybeth with a proposition of marriage.

After her father's death leaves her with no means of support, Marybeth Kruger is in danger of having her two-year-old half sister taken from her. So when Edward Vogel, the widower husband of her late best friend, offers her a marriage of convenience to escape both their troubles, she has no choice but to accept.

Life in Cheyenne is fraught with danger, but will this arrangement be enough to save Edward and Marybeth from the pasts they tried to escape? Or will life with each other put them—and their hearts—in more danger?"



Another book this month is MATTERS OF THE HEART, Book #2 in the 'Amish Calling' series by Kelly Irvin. "Declan Miller has always had feelings for Bethel King. Back when they were in school, she was the smartest girl in the class and, in his opinion, by far the prettiest. Now the two of them are in their twenties and while the attraction is still there, Declan is as hesitant as ever to let Bethel know how he feels. His corny jokes and wisecracks cover a heart that's afraid of rejection.

Bethel can't deny Declan is nice, funny, hardworking, and pleasing to the eye—a perfect match if you asked any Plain girl in the area. But marrying Bethel would also mean marrying into her family. Two of her younger brothers have a rare form of muscular dystrophy, and her sister Claire is now showing signs of having it as well. Fiercely loyal and nurturing Bethel will always put her siblings first. With a good chance that she carries the gene and could pass it on to her children, she has tried to convince herself marriage and family just aren't in the cards for her.

Then a devastating diagnosis of his own turns Declan's world upside down and he looks to Bethel for understanding, compassion and a realistic outlook. As they share their dreams and fears and grow together in faith, a bond begins to develop between them. Perhaps their combination of optimistic extrovert and thoughtful introvert really isn't such a bad thing—perhaps it's actually a part of God's beautiful design."

Stop in the library soon and see what is available for your reading enjoyment.

--Jeannette Juffer





Dear Friends,

Today I'm writing my seventh Dear Friends letter for 2024 focused on the word "connection." If you missed the first six letters of this series, you can read them by visiting my RCA missionary page at <a href="www.rca.org/tenclay">www.rca.org/tenclay</a>, scrolling down to the Resources section, and clicking on

the links for the DF letters from February-July 2024.

There are so many things I love about being called to this ministry. Still, perhaps one of my favorite things is the opportunity to work with people all over the world who believe that caring for refugees and displaced people is a faith-filled response to the love God has shown us.

We love because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Part of my job is to draw the circle wide and create a network of people all around the world who are willing to put the love of Christ into action for people forced to flee their homes and who are in search of refuge.

In 2022, I was in the final stages of a fundraising project to raise \$65,000 to keep eight schools for Rohingya refugee children in Myanmar and Bangladesh open, as our mission partners (Partners Relief & Development) did not have enough funds to keep these schools going. To my great surprise and delight, I received an email from my friend and colleague, Rev. Dr. Gretchen Schoon Tanis, stating that her English-speaking congregation (RELISH) in Hannover, Germany, took a special offering during one of their worship services for this project!

The Reformed English Language International Service in Hannover (RELISH) was founded by the Evangelisch-Reformierte

Kirchengemeinde Hannover, in partnership with RCA Global Mission, on Pentecost Sunday 2015.

This ministry began offering once-a-month worship in English for the multicultural diaspora community in Hannover, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, they increased their services to twice per month, and continue to offer worship services twice per month to this day!

In early June, I reached out to Gretchen to see if RELISH would be interested in partnering with me one last time before she departed from Germany to participate in World Refugee Sunday, and to collect an offering for the RCA Global Mission South Sudan Refugee Care Project, and her answer was yes!

As I've shared in previous Dear Friends letters and other updates, raising \$85,000 to support the work of RCA missionaries and mission partners providing care for South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda has been a 2+ year labor of love, with many obstacles along the way. World Refugee Sunday in June of this year was our final push to finish raising the funds we pledged to raise to support this life-saving and life-sustaining work.

By the grace of God and the fellowship of the faithful—who saw not only the suffering of the people of South Sudan, but also the hope of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and trauma healing for a country that has experienced more than 50 years of violent conflict and displacement—I'm grateful to announce that we have met our goal!

The RELISH Community in Hannover, Germany, helped us reach that goal.

Here is part of what Gretchen shared with me:

The RELISH Community had a lot of affirmation to take up this cause as they are familiar with the stresses and strains of moving across cultures to new countries and locations in the best of circumstances. They recognize the trials and stressors of doing that in less-than-ideal situations such as war and famine. So they were happy to support this worthy endeavor. It is a small offering given with great heart.

July 28 was Gretchen's final Sunday serving with her beloved community of RELISH in Hannover, and, just a few days ago, the Schoon Tanis Family returned to West Michigan.

Will you join me in giving thanks to God for their ministry and service in Hannover (and beyond), and join



# in me praying for them as they adjust to life back in the U.S. after almost a decade of serving abroad?

Even though Gretchen's time with RELISH has ended, I'm grateful that she so lovingly passed the torch to two of my other friends and colleagues—Chelsea and Jeff Lampen—who have been called as the new ministers for the RELISH community.

This week the Lampen Family will be traveling to Hannover to begin their time of serving and ministering with the RELISH Community in Hannover.

Will you join me in praying for a good transition to life in Hannover for the entire Lampen Family, and the continued fruitful ministry of RELISH?



And, to the RELISH Community, I want to say thank you for joining me and RCA Global Mission to provide compassionate, Christ-like care for both Rohingya refugees living in Myanmar and Bangladesh, and for South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda. Blessings to you as you continue to share the light of Christ with one another in Hannover and all around the world.

In Faith, Hope, and Love, JJ TenClay



### **Attitude of Gratitude**

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which read, "I am blind, please help."

There were only a few coins in the hat – spare change from folks as they hurried past. A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. Then he put the sign back in the boy's hand so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon, the man who had changed the sign returned to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?" The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way."

#### I wrote, "Today is a beautiful day, but I cannot see it."

Both signs spoke the truth. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind, while the second sign conveyed to everyone walking by how grateful they should be to see...

When your life seems full of troubles, it seems difficult to maintain an attitude of gratitude, doesn't it? All we see are our problems, like a blackened storm cloud casting a dark shadow over our lives. And the times when everything just seems to be going smoothly? We often take these precious moments for granted too, don't we? Caught up in the bliss, comfort, and familiarity of it all, we can simply forget to be thankful.

#### So what, then, is gratitude?

Simply put, gratitude is a habit. It's a way of looking at the world and all the good things in it with a feeling of appreciation, regardless of whether or not your current situation is to your liking.

Gratitude is a heart-centered approach to being at peace with yourself and with all you have. When you practice this feeling of gratitude, it attracts even MORE things into your life for which to be grateful.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving pilgrim mayflower gratitude yams pumpkin autumn stuffing Massachusetts grandpa dressing comucopia combread squash aunt sister acoms

pilgrim indian november thankful grandma turkey pie rolls Plymoth uncle cranberries feast drumstick wishbone cousin carve







November 13, 7:00pm congregational MEETING



# **Annual Remnant Youth Food Find**

When: November 20 from 6:30-8:30pm
All Non-Perishable foods needed.

#### NO FROZEN ITEMS!!!!!

Please turn on your porch light if you want a student to stop.

Donations can also be dropped off at church Monday-Wednesday afternoon.





JOIN THE S-O FFA CHAPTER, OCHEYEDAN METHODIST CHURCH, AND SIBLEY FIRST REFORMED CHURCH FOR A MEAL AND SILENT AUCTION. ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE TRAVAILLE FAMILY FOR HELP WITH MEDICAL EXPENSES.

> ANY QUESTIONS? CONTACT TRISTEN BREMER (TRISTEN BREMER@THEGENERALS.ORG)



A Donation Table will be set up in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 24th for people to drop off donations for the Silent Auction. Gift Cards, Gift Baskets, 1 Pie a Month Certificate, Car Wash Cards, etc. Be creative! All donations will be brought to the school for the December 2nd Benefit.

This is your chance to be the hands and feet of Jesus to a hurting family.